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© BERT GOBBLER



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# COMMENT

I grabbed my Smartphone, plugged in my headphones and sat myself down in a darkened room the other day to give myself a real treat. After opening up the brand-new DBR news app on my Nokia Lumia I made myself comfy and lost myself in Episode 4 of the outstanding Monster Energy Supercross – Chasing The Dream video series for 40-odd minutes.

If you have no idea what I'm on about then you need to get yourself online right now to sniff out the series. The smart way to do that would be to clear some time in your schedule, download our app – it's available in the Apple App Store and on Google Play for FREE right now – then have a look for the Chasing The Dream series in the Supercross section. Trust me – it'll be well worth it.

Of course, if you're a desktop user – or just don't fancy taking advantage of the benefits our new app offers – then you'll be able to find the videos on our website ([www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)) in the traditional way.

Moving back to Chasing The Dream for a moment and the fourth episode focuses on the Eastern Regional 250cc class – and in particular the back and forth fight between Josh Hill, Malcolm Stewart, Jeremy Martin and Aaron Plessinger for the title.

As well as highlighting the emotional rollercoaster that each racer rides week in, week out this particular video also offers a ton of insight into just how gnarly these tracks are – due to both the design and also the softer soil the circuits on the eastern swing are built from – as well as the intense challenge of competition. These athletes are really put through their paces for our viewing pleasure.

While the focus is most definitely on the front runners I couldn't help but think about the two British lads who took on the series and acquitted themselves remarkably well – Paul Coates ended the season 13th in points while Chesterfield's Gradie Featherstone came into the series late and made a couple of mains as a total privateer to end up 31st in the final series standings.

While that might be old news to most of you it's still worth clearing your mind, watching Episode 4 and reflecting on what both riders had to battle through in order to get those results. In my mind it's absolutely amazing and the levels of skill, fitness and bravery needed are mind blowing.

If you do manage to watch it and don't get a higher level of appreciation for their exploits (or get moved by the overall awesomeness that the Chasing The Dream series is) then you must be dead inside or a northern man which I'm told is something that suffers from that exact same condition...

I take it you're all excited about the British GP which goes off at Matterley Basin on June 18/19 – I know I am. Last year's event was a bit of a weird one for me so fingers crossed I get there without any stress this time around. That said, the anticipated battle between the big-hitters in MX1 and the very real prospect of a British winner in MX2 would make driving through hell or high water just to get there well worth it so bring it on!

I'll see y'all there...

**JAMES THE CAT**  
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# TONY CAIROLI



## TONY'S FINALLY HERE WITH SOME GOOD NEWS – GOOD NEWS FOR HIM BUT MAYBE NOT HIS COMPETITION . . .

**A**fter Mexico I turned a new page and focused totally on training and testing the bike. Because my injury is getting a little better I can now spend more time riding and more time improving my body and physical fitness.

The three races in a row after the South American leg were much better than the previous ones and now I'm again confident that I can stay in the game until the end of the year. You know, it's frustrating to race against your rivals knowing that you can't battle, you can't respond to the attacks when you're leading a race and it's not easy to accept that you can't fight with the same confidence as your opponents. Anyway now things are slowly getting better, my physical condition is better and I'm working hard on my shoulder in order to regain my strength.

In the last three races I was second in the qualifying race twice and I won in Germany. I took four holeshots in six starts and I was on the podium three times. I came second in Latvia and then won in Germany and in Italy with three victories, two second places and one third place in the six motos.

The turning point for me was the week between the races in Kegums and Teutschenthal when we received a lot of new material to test from Austria. The bike is just amazing and I feel really comfortable riding the 450. We are working constantly on all areas of the bike from the engine to the suspension and we still have other stuff to test in order to be

more competitive.

In Latvia I was feeling well but still not good enough to be fast right to the end of the heats. I was able to get good starts and to be good in the first third of the heat but then my shoulder would start causing me some problems.

In Germany, however, everything went well, it was kind of a perfect weekend with three victories in three races, starting with the qualifying race on Saturday and completed with the 1-1 finish on Sunday. The track helped me a little bit – crispy, technical and not so fast. I loved it!

The ruts were deep and it was really important to ride as smooth and clean as possible in order to be fast and avoid any mistakes. I was looking at the statistics at the end of the day – something I usually don't do – and I saw that I was leading for all the 50 laps of the three races! Now that's unusual!

It had been almost a year since I was on top of the box and it's such a good feeling to be back there. I was feeling the same in Arco di Trento when after a very good race I grabbed my second victory in two weeks and I stood on the first step of the podium in front of my home crowd! It was so emotional to see and hear the Italian fans singing the national anthem and screaming my name.

I love my fans and for this reason we have decided to start a new Fan Club completely free of charge for all of my supporters from all over the world. I want to give them all the opportunity to feel a part of my big racing

family. They can join the club by coming to the races or by going online at [www.tc222fanclub.com](http://www.tc222fanclub.com) signing up for free and becoming a member.

After only one week I can say that it's a big success like my video game – TC222 Challenge. It's amazing really but more than 150,000 gamers and motocross fans downloaded the game to their iOS devices and we only launched less than three months ago! The game allows players to compete on five different tracks – Maggiora, Lommel, a supercross arena, a jump line and a brand-new track especially designed for this game experience.

In a few weeks I'll be back in Matterley Basin – the track where I won my last GP of 2015, a race that I love, located in a special place that means a lot to me. So I can't wait to meet you again soon in England!

Ci vediamo presto in pista amici inglesi (see you at the track soon my English friends)!



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# BRYAN MACKENZIE



## AFTER SURVIVING THE SQUITS AND WINNING A MAXXIS MOTO IRN BRY ROCKS OUT WITH BUSTED — TRUE STORY, BRO . . .

For the first time in a long time I've had a busy month with stuff going on. Sometimes I struggle to dream up a situation I feel worthy to share with you guys because unlike Justin Bieber, Travis Pastrana or Stevie the constable not all that much exciting happens to me on a regular 'tup norf. But look out, last month was bursting at the seams with goodness so much so that crafting a seamlessly flowing story that would gently brush over each worthy event would be out of BryMac the blogger league and into Roald Dahl territory. So, screw that, I'm just gonna load up each piece I've got for you and blast your eyeballs with my bullish\*t in an erratic, word pirate kinda way and hopefully I'll tell you something you probably didn't know already...

We're having a baby (old news) and last month we found out what flavour. Not many people would know the old trouble and strife and I were expecting a family addition as we have just let the news spread organically (a bit like my seed) amongst our friends (no I don't mean I've spread my seed through my friends). The wife is healthily showing now at the halfway point and we found out that we're having a little girl. I take great pleasure in knowing that it already doesn't look like she's into DBK's because every time she wriggles around in there and I reach out to feel her she freezes like a game of musical statues. It must be the calloused hands. Suits me though. All you buddies that are having little boys destined to be motocross riders won't get a look in. Phew.

This year the Apico Husky team have lent me and BC a race van to travel to and from the races. My bro has started competing the Clubman class at the British Masters so I've lent him my R1m for the season to take him and his family to the races, too. But an hour into the drive on the way home from round two at Brookthorpe I get a phone call from Deano that I need to turn around because my camper is on fire! On Fire! Sh\*tting myself, I pulled into the first servo and waited on him phoning me back with the damage. Thankfully it wasn't blazing up but a blown out turbo which was reeking so bad it looked like a party bus with built in smoke

machine. It took him over 24 hours and five trucks to get relayed back home.

In the meantime after a good day scrambling where I picked up a race win – and with the news that my camper wasn't in fact on fire – I celebrated with a KFC, the last KFC I will ever have may I add. I contracted food poisoning from a dodgy Zinger burger and I was as sick as a dog all week. I don't often do ill, I do injured a lot, but not often ill, so that was the sickest I've been in absolute years. It was horrendous. You can imagine the scene. I'll spare you the details. But I literally ate three bits of toast and a handful of grapes until Thursday as the week approached the Maxxis at Hawkstone. Beautiful, just the right prep for an ass whooping in gnarly conditions.

I won at Hawkstone though. Against the odds and even surprising myself I won the first moto pretty comfortably. Arm pump has been my biggest nemesis this year – it used to be Nev Bradshaw. I've shown good speed this season but my end game has been weak because I've been struggling with pump.

But leading into Hawkstone I didn't expect anything except to perish as a man in punishing conditions. I went in with the plan of saving energy so I could finish the races at a relatively decent speed but low and behold I went start to finish in the first moto and picked up my first race win since '14. The second race I rode well, too, but had to pass 18 guys to reach ninth place at the finish and admittedly I was spent at the end of that slugfest.

The MX Nationals raced at my track – Duns Motocross Track – at the end of May. That left me super busy for a few weeks prior and absolutely any spare time I had was invested into getting the track and site ready for them coming. Looking after the track is a full-time job, hence the reason I have a full-time employee. You wouldn't know it but I do actually run a business too, you know. Each week I have to deal with bills, wages, problems, work and the fu\*king weather, as well as training, riding and racing. It's a tough schedule but I'm doing not too bad at managing it pretty well for now.

I had a photographer for a leading front line

ladies fashion magazine which will remain nameless – but it rhymes with Rogue – down at my track one day on a scouting mission to see how they could combine motocross, Scotland and ladies fashion. Don't ask me who came up with that shoot specification but of course I was happy to oblige and act as an ambassador for motocross for the day. I did some riding to allow them to do some test images and gave them a quick motocross 101 so that they could understand us better to give them a chance to try and merge the two which makes us (motocross) look good. I hope I did a good job.

Like a new level on Mario Kart I unlocked a new lucky kit. Every year I have a got-to kit which is like my get out of trouble card. Whenever I find myself in a sh\*tty situation and looking to turn my day around I pull out my ace which is normally what I like to think of as my lucky kit. Every rider has a bit of superstition to his race programme and mine is my kit. I won the moto at Hawkstone wearing the new ANSR '17 Syncron kit in red! From now until it does me a bad turn if I'm wearing that you know I'm looking for more! It might not seem like much to you but to me it's a nice find for the month.

I went to a Busted concert! VIP'd out my tits, the wife and I, courtesy of Rockstar Energy Drink, went to see the Busted reunited tour at the Hydro (where they hold the AXUK) in Glasgow. Don't get me wrong I wasn't pulling my pants off and throwing them on stage at the boys now or anything but it was a good opportunity to experience some great next level hospitality at an absolutely huge event that wasn't a motocross race. It's surprising though how many words you know to a Busted album BTW. We even got to meet the guys in the band after and your man Matt Willis even knew who I was – of course I let him have a picture with me. After all I was his favourite Scottish MX2 rider that was at the show that evening...



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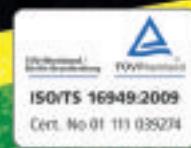
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# STEVE HOLCOMBE



## AS THE ENDUROGP SERIES ENJOYS YET ANOTHER MUDDER SUPER STEVE'S HOLDING FIRM AT THE TOP OF THE ENDURO 3 CHAMPIONSHIP

It never rains but it pours! That's pretty much how it's been recently in the Enduro World Championship. Firstly, Portugal was a mud-fest and more recently Greece of all places almost got washed out. Not that I'm complaining – I love the mud. But I'd say it's about time the weather gods gave the series a break.

Amazingly, we're just one event away from the midway point of the series. Come the start of July there'll be just two races before the end of the championship. I guess time really does fly when you're having fun.

Without wanting to make this month's column sound like one long collection of clichés I learned at the GP of Portugal that every day (as a racer) certainly is a school day. I came away from the event with a bigger lead in the Enduro 3 championship than at the start of it but boy did I eat sh\*t on the enduro test on day one!

The fact that I still have a good lead in the E3 championship is probably the second biggest thing I've got to pleased about right now. The first is the fact that I bounced and didn't break anything when I hit the ground. I've not had a get-off like that for a while and fingers crossed that's my big crash for the year now out of the way.

Although I managed to top the Enduro 3 class on day one despite my crash, looking back it certainly took the wind out of my sails for the second day. Despite bent bars I didn't feel too bad on day one and managed to slip and slide my way to another Enduro 3 class win which was cool. But I was feeling it on Sunday.

I thought my riding was good, I certainly felt okay but the times just weren't coming like

I wanted them to. Seemed that there wasn't much I could do and despite pushing as hard as I could I missed the podium for the first time this year.

I only missed the podium by one position and a handful of seconds but having been inside the top three since the start of the championship it didn't feel great being back at the Beta truck while others were celebrating. But I guess that's how it goes some times. It was a bad day for me but I still got a fourth.

One thing that's taking some getting used to is the new start order the world championship series is now using. I'm racing in the Enduro 3 class and all of my contracts relate specifically to how I perform in the E3 class. But the riders around me are from all three classes – E1, E2 and E3. It's a mixed, overall starting order. Now that there's a daily overall result and we start each day in our overall championship order, it's hard to consider only the riders in my class – guys like my team-mate Johnny Aubert.

I want to do as well as I can – that goes without saying – but doing well in the overall EnduroGP class means keeping pace with guys that aren't in my championship. It's a bit of a weird one and like mixing MXGP and MX2 riders together.

Winning any race is great but trying to make the pass on an MX2 guy if you're an MXGP rider is where things get interesting. Crash while trying to make that pass and everyone will ask why you took an unnecessary risk. Stay behind that rider and risk getting caught by another MXGP rider and people will ask why you didn't try and make the pass. See where I'm coming from?



It's a little different in enduro as there's obviously no real side-by-side racing or passing going on. But it's kind of the same situation. Do I go all-out and try and fight with Eero Remes, Matt Phillips and the guys or do I just do what I need to do and take no unneeded risks in order to get the best E3 class result?

In a way going for the overall win is the safest thing to do as racing to your limit means you're certainly 100 per cent focused. But when you're riding at 100 per cent, especially in challenging conditions, mistakes can, and will, inevitably happen.

It's one I haven't quite figured out yet but having come through another round of the championship at the head of the Enduro 3 championship standings I guess I might need to start thinking more about my class result and less about the overall result during the upcoming GPs.

Before I end this month I want to say get well soon to Jamie McCann. You'll probably have read that before the GP of Greece, and without crashing, he broke three bones in his right foot. Injuries suck! Hope you're back at it soon Jamie.

Ciao.  
Steve

A large, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Steve Holcombe' with the number '70' written next to it. The signature is fluid and expressive.



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# DANIEL GROVE



Photo by Matt Dean

## OUR FACTORY SPECTATORS MUSES OVER MEWSSE AND WONDERS IF CONRAD IS OUR NEXT TOMMY...

I've been checking out a fair few races this year in spectator form as that's pretty much my life now. It's not really but I have watched more pro racing this year already than I do every other year so I'm quite in touch with who's doing what in British motocross.

I think I've attended at least one Maxxis round every season since 2005 and what's alarming is that the dudes that were racing back then are still going at it now – what's even more alarming is the fact that they're still podium guys. I'm not bagging on them in the slightest, in fact it's a testament to their character that they continue to train all winter when it's fucking freezing outside and race all summer – year in, year out – as the taste of podium pie clearly satisfies their palate. And why wouldn't it?

In the press conference at the Canada Heights round (they have those now at the Maxxis as that series has certainly been modernised for this year) Tommy Searle was asked when the last time he raced there was. 2007 was his answer and who won that year? Shaun Simpson in MX2 and who won this year in MX1? Shaun Simpson!

I first saw Tommy Searle race in a Maxxis round back in '05 at Culham and I'm pretty sure he went 5-5 or 5-6 so given that he probably ended up fifth overall for the day – being the brilliant mathematician that I am – that was a common theme for him back then which still rings true today 11 years on. Consistency is no doubt his strongest attribute when it comes to racing motocross and this is what I would say is the hardest element to obtain, but Searle has it. Sure he's been injured over the last couple of seasons and a little bit this year but up until 2014 he was solid and he's on the right path to get that consistency back.

Every weekend – whether I'm racing or just practicing – I see dudes lay down a burner for one or three or five laps. While this may give them satisfaction as a racer you need to maintain your pace throughout the whole race. Yeah, you may get a good gate pick if there's timed qualifying

but when the race results go up at the end of the day your fastest lap doesn't count for much when your lap times fall off a cliff half way through a race and you fade backwards in an arm pump induced spiral of emotions.

Your fitness has to be good enough to last every lap of every moto if you want to succeed in racing and that's the bottom line. Searle has a handle on this too since turning pro and when he started off his pro career in the British Championship in 2005 he would always clock up a couple of sixths, then fifths, working his way towards the podium as he matured and figured out top level racing. There was no 'win it or bin it' mentality and we all for sure know who those racers are.

He moved out of his parents' house at 15 or 16 and moved in with Jamie Dobb who was his manager then and also our last World Champion. Now, I was never a huge fan of Dobby, however, what you can't take away from him is the fact that he is a World Champ and knew how to get the job done so for Searle to move in and use Dobb's old trainer... well, he was set up for glory from the start.

There are a lot of 'trainers' out there at the moment which I guess is great as they know how to ride better than a lot of us do and will no doubt benefit riders of less ability to them but I think to have any success on the world stage you need guidance from someone that has been there and done it, solely for the mental guidance. For sure there are a lot of 'fast' racers worldwide but World Champions and their knowledge is a little harder to come by...

Searle's race results would steadily improve over time and after a couple of rocky wildcard GP appearances in 2005 he was on the podium at the Matterley GP in 2006 in what would be the turning point of his career. I was there to witness it in person and his pass on Sebastian Pourcel in the closing stages of the second race that day made him a British fan favourite for life for everyone that witnessed it.

Searle was never a dominant figure in

schoolboy racing so he wasn't used to winning but he was used to plugging away to try and reach the top. This is very similar to Ryan Villopoto who used to get handled by Mike Alessi in schoolboy racing but it's safe to say that Ryan and Mike have both led different paths in their careers. Mike's Dad still carries on about how Mike beat Ryan all the time in their youth career but what does that mean nowadays? Absolutely nothing! No one cares...

So where am I going with this? Well, I've been watching Tommy race for 11 years and I would still consider him as our next hope for World glory which is pretty frightening. I'm well aware we have a bunch of lightning fast racers on 250Fs but none of them have shown the type of consistency that Searle has shown over the last decade in the early parts of their careers.

Sure they're fast but you need to set realistic goals, reach them, then build from them as no one turns pro at 16 and dominates for years on end – it's just never happened and it never will. Even Herlings couldn't manage it!

I'm well aware of Conrad Mewse going 1-1 at the opening round of the EMX250 series which is great but I'm a little baffled by his move up to MX2 after that victory and I don't agree with it from any angle. For Conrad, 2016 should have been about putting some consistency together, getting used to racing the 250F on a variety of tracks and more importantly, building a solid base for 2017.

Time will tell if Conrad can be the next guy to follow on and join the ranks as one of the UK's best motocrossers (and to be fair he has shown consistency thus far in MX2 GPs) and take the weight off of Tommy's shoulders once and for all. On current form it's down to him and Adam Sterry to take his place and with the British GP coming up in two weeks there just isn't a better time or place to get the job done and give us all a new British hero.

*Daniel Grove*



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Photo: R. Schmidl



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# BAKED SKITTLES



## DESPITE PICKING UP AN ASS INJURY OR TWO JAKE'S BACK IN THE GROOVE OF THE GP GAME...

I ended last time by saying that I need more races. We certainly haven't had a lack of them since I wrote that – it's been pretty hectic this last month! I'd actually forgotten what it was like racing back-to-back GPs and British championship rounds. I'll be honest, it's bloody tough physically as most of you can imagine. What most people don't take into account though are all the little aches and pains you pick up from racing Saturday and Sunday, week in week out.

For example, in Latvia I landed off the finish line jump awkwardly and sat down into the face of a bump. The force from sitting down accidentally meant that the seat basically did nothing and the bottom part of both my ass cheeks/top of my thighs took a huge blow from the subframe.

It didn't hurt much at the time but when I got back on my practice bike the following Wednesday I felt it straight away. It's the little things like these that people don't realise or really hear about and I know that every rider there is always dealing with something of the sort. Perhaps I've gone a bit soft after being away from it for a while!

It's been good though and I've started showing some good speed at the races and I'm more comfortable on the bike. My suspension is so much harder now than from the start of the year and I've lost weight which means I'm starting to twist it a bit more. We've also found a good engine set-up now which as I've wrote before isn't that easy to find on the big bikes.

We got the motor just before the German GP so I tried it back-to-back with my relatively stock bike I had been running up to then in the Free Practice. Straight away I liked it and realised this was the right direction. I had an 11th and 12th in Germany which was a decent day for me in the very strong MXGP field.

I made a lot of mistakes in both races but held tough for those results. The same weekend we made some big changes with the suspension too which paid dividends on Sunday so results aside Germany was a very productive weekend.

Italy was looking much the same the following weekend until a collision early in the first race damaged the bike and while having a good race I had to back it off a bit in order to finish. The damage meant that I couldn't use the motor in the second race which didn't seem like much of an issue to me but it soon became clear to me in race two how much I liked the race engine. I struggled like mad to get power to the ground on the slippery, choppy, hard packed surface of Trentino and although it wasn't the best race I got through it with some points and a clear head of what I want from all of my bikes from here on out.

Fair play to Ian Browne and my mechanic Steve Henderson – they worked hard all week in Belgium and got my race bike back together for Hawkstone. I've worked and am still working hard to make this a good season but without the support of people like them, us riders are somewhat useless as at our level every single thing to do with the bike is critical – we are fussy because we have to be!

I must admit I'm really enjoying the British Championship this year – the two race format is so much better. The longer races, the extra time to get ready in between them and being able to leave the track at a normal time are all pluses for me. And importantly having Tommy and Shaun there is mint for my riding. They are battling between each other for the championship currently but I'm enjoying getting nearer to them and proved a couple times now that I can upset them.

You appreciate the extra day and a half at home in the week prior to a British round too.

Almost every GP means a 4am start on Friday mornings to Stansted and a late Sunday night or Monday morning flight and it so makes the weeks feel short. Especially for my wife Blu who works Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday between them.

She had the weekend off last weekend though so no excuses from her now – haha! She can sleep for England at the best of times which is a pain in the ass for a bad sleeper like myself. With a house and three dogs plus one cat it means that going away isn't that simple. It would be cool to take them all with us although I'd probably leave the sausage dog at home.

But thankfully my mate who still lives with his parents comes and looks after the set up while we're away which is well handy. The first time he did it my mates stitched him up and put one of Blu's thongs up on the chandelier so it was hanging right in sight. Her face dropped when she saw it – luckily they weren't skidded up.

Practising has been fun for the last couple of months. I always ride with Tombsy and Elliott – they're my best mates at the races and they're local too so it makes sense for us to ride together. It's a shame Tommy doesn't live closer as we get on well and always say it would be good for both of us to ride together but the travelling on the weekends is enough without long mid-week drives too...

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As always we will have camping available on site, as well as a great place for deals in our trade village which overlooks the track, so you never have to miss the action. If you're planning on staying in a nearby hotel, book now as they usually sell out straight away!

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# NEWSHOUND



*Jeffrey Herlings is coming under pressure in MX2, but he's still the man to beat*

## AN ELECTRIC MIX OF ALL THAT'S GOOD — AND NOT SO GOOD — IN THE OFF-ROAD UNIVERSE . . .

In MX2 GPs it looks like Herlings is starting to get ruffled. The undisputed fastest 250F rider in the world has had a couple of close calls of late with riders stepping forward to challenge the Dutchman.

First it was Anstie and Seewer in Germany who showed the #84 the fast way around for most of the second MX2 moto. Anstie had the race all but won before throwing it away leaving Seewer to hold off the KTM rider until the final lap-and-a-half. There were fireworks afterwards when Herlings lost his head at the Swiss rider, claiming he dangerously cut him off on a jump during the race and then went on to rant live on TV, ripping into his old team boss Stefan Everts.

"Obviously Stefan Everts doesn't like me so now he tries to get his riders to clean me out. It just motivates me more to break all of his records because I really don't like him."

It's no secret that Everts and Herlings didn't get on while they worked together at KTM and it was previously speculated that was in fact the reason Stefan left the KTM powerhouse for a

job at Suzuki.

Actually seeing the job of beating Herlings right through was Dylan Ferrandis. He's like Batman to the MX2 Superman and the Frenchman is the only man to have taken the Dutchy's scalp by claiming a qualifying race and moto win at the GP of Trentino.

In other hot Ferrandis news it was announced that he is signed up to go Stateside in '17 and '18 for the Star Racing Yamaha team to race Lites supercross and motocross. It's no surprise that the Frenchman is going to the US — but on a Yamaha? Ferrandis was expected to stick with Kawasaki and hook up with the Pro Circuit Kawi team but will be riding for the powerful Yamaha squad instead.

MXGP has offered up yet another winner too in what's turning out to be an amazing season. The new-but-old winner is none other than former world champ Tony Cairoli. TC went almost a year without claiming a moto or an overall win and then picked up three motos and two overalls in two weekends to

catapult himself right back into the title fight. He claims that the progression is due to his ever-improving arm injury sustained earlier in the year and new hardware for his KTM 450. Whatever it is it's great to see him back on top of the box at the ripe age of 30 and showing the kids what's up.

It's been like a good night out in Newcastle under the factory Rinaldi Yamaha awning between team-mates Jeremy Van Horebeek and Romain Febvre as bitching and flared tempers have seen handbags cocked and loaded!

In Germany it all kicked off after a dispute on the start line when Febvre took the gate prepared by JVH. The Jerre wasn't stoked and proceeded to take out his championship-leading stablemate on the opening laps of the moto, sending Febvre to the back of the pack for a single figure score while title rival Gajser took a haul of points. Subsequently, Febvre lost the red plate as a result and the relationship between the two Yamaha riders is, er, fragile.



Eight-time world champ Tony Cairoli has found his form and is coming on strong as the season progresses



MXGP rookie Tim Gajser is holding tightly to the red plate

With all this is going on it's no wonder Tim Gajser has the MXGP red plate welded to his CRF450. The reigning MX2 world champ has landed himself on the podium at every GP this season so far after the eight rounds. Gajser is holding strong odds to win the championship this season in his rookie year and then is heavily rumoured to be going to the USA next season.

Febvre and Cairoli are his two main threats and it's not quite clear should he not take the title this season if that would delay his Stateside aspirations.

Who wants an up close, interactive experience of this year's Matterley Basin MXGP on June 18-19? Well, wrap your melon around this – the ACU is looking for volunteers to marshal the weekend and get wrapped up in the action. It's a money-can't-buy vantage point to watch MXGP, MX2, EMX 125, EMX 250, EMX 150 and EMX 300 and no previous marshalling experience is required, albeit useful.

A full training briefing is scheduled for the Friday prior and each marshal will receive a

GP goody bag along with free camping, one extra guest pass and lunch over the weekend. Appealing? Contact Kirsty Telford in the ACU Motocross Department on 01788 566408 or by email on [kirsty@acu.org.uk](mailto:kirsty@acu.org.uk).

KTM and Husqvarna continue to forge the path in the future of motocross as for 2017 they introduce air forks to their junior motocross range by adding them to their 50cc and 65cc machines. I don't know the reasons behind this but if I had to guess it's to change the opinion of the air forks which come on their senior models.

I hear a lot of a lot of people having problems adjusting to the new air fork technology found on pretty much all production adult bikes in this day and age which I put down to growing up riding youth bikes with spring forks. I assume this is their plan of action to get riders accustomed to air forks at a young age.

Just when you thought you'd seen the last of the recently retired multi-time American MX and SX champion Ryan Villopoto, he announces



## COUNTDOWN!

NOT LONG TO WAIT FOR MATTERLEY MXGP WEEKENDER...

It's not too long now until the MXGP elite converge on Matterley Basin for the British GP. Considered to be the best event of the whole year by the majority of riders the UK round of the FIM World Motocross Championship is set to scorch on the weekend of June 18/19. With the MXGP title chase proving to be the tightest in a good few years and the genuine chance of a British winner in MX2 – go Max! – all indications are it'll be an ace weekend. And with supporting EMX 300, 250 and 125 action – plus the 150 Hondas n'all – it's gonna be a busy one! Check out official website [britmxgrandprix.com](http://britmxgrandprix.com) for last-minute ticket offers and all the information about the event you'd ever need!

## APP, APP AND AWAY!

DBR (THAT'S US) LAUNCHES THE WORLD'S FIRST MX NEWS APP...

It's fairly amazing what the new breed of Smartphones are capable of and thanks to our good friends at Rumble we've just made the globe's Smartphones even smarter. That's because Rumble has helped us develop and launch a brand-new news app that delivers breaking dirt bike stories (that's dirt bike stories as they happen and not just stories about broken dirt bikes – although they do feature in the feed occasionally) direct to your device.

Available to download right now from Google Play and the Apple App Store for free – yep, that's nada, nowt, nuffink, zero, zilch and so on – this Dirt Bike Rider news app is pretty much the first of its kind in the English speaking world and delivers an exciting stream of news, imagery and videos – y'know, stuff you really wanna see – and is nothing like one of those crappy apps that are just substandard digital versions of actual magazines. Boring. What's the point in them?

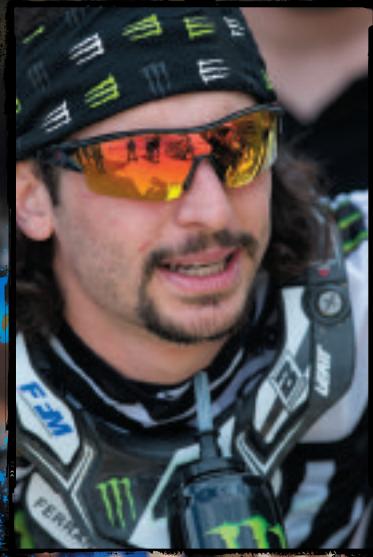
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that he is coming back in a stand-alone one-off appearance to race the 2016 AUS-X Open on November 12-13.

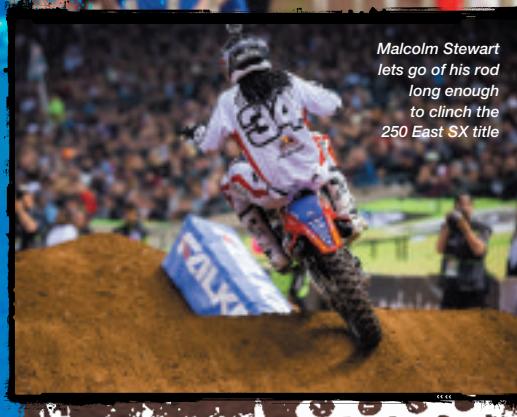
It will be the first competitive appearance for RV2 since the infamous loop-out that cut his MXGP appearance short and fast-tracked the already pencilled-in retirement party. He will be up against old rival Chad Reed as well as the Aussies' best home-grown talent so it'll be no cakewalk – if he fancies racing to win he'd better put in a little bit of homework.

Malky Stewart finally underlined his obvious talent by winning the East Lites SX title. Young Stewart has often struggled with consistency since turning pro in 2010 but has now followed in his big bro's footsteps who has his name etched on the trophy from back in 2004, making them the first brother duo to win a supercross championship.

Believe it or not, as a nipper – while James was off racing dirt bikes – Malcolm took to fishing before deciding to give riding a whirl again a few short years before turning pro and >>>



French tickler  
Dylan Ferrandis  
has signed a  
Stateside deal  
with Star Yamaha



Malcolm Stewart  
lets go of his rod  
long enough  
to clinch the  
250 East SX title



Barty Marr is the man to beat in  
the Maxxis MX2 class right now

he claims fishing to still be his first real passion, even over riding his dirt bike.

The West Region SX championship went down to the last chequered flag of the season too. Cooper Webb did the damage and retained the title he won last year but not without drama. Webb rode the final round with a broken scaphoid in his wrist after a practice crash a week or two prior to Vegas. In the end all's well that ends well but Webb's butthole would have been making buttons as he limped through the last Main Event of the year in 12th place while his title rivals finished ahead of him. However, he did just enough to clinch the championship by a couple of points.

Both Lites champions now have to move into the 450 class next year by AMA ruling.

I'm not sure if I've said this before out loud or not but the hardest job in the world of motocross has to be the one of the Yoshimura Suzuki American press guy. How often does that man have to polish a turd when it comes to his weekly press release when every time star man James Stewart lines up he doesn't finish and is unsure of his immediate future health status.

After sitting out most of the SX season his comeback in the Outdoor championship was short-lived when he went out of the very first moto with a dislocated shoulder. Team-mate Blake Baggett suffered a similar fate as he crashed in race two but broke his collarbone and completed the remaining four laps of the race with it completely in two. Now that's a badass story, I'd lead with that...

Reigning British MX2 champ Steven Lenoir was missing from British championship duty in his rookie MX1 season at Hawkstone Park after suffering a broken hand competing at the German GP as he finished his term as a fill-in rider on the 24MX Honda team. Lenoir still races in the UK for Dyer & Butler KTM but was kindly granted a free pass to chase the GP dream for the Honda outfit as it didn't interfere

with his British championship schedule. It's unfortunate it ended how it did for the Frenchman but hindsight is a wonderful thing.

Tommy Searle could potentially be one of the unluckiest dudes on two wheels at the moment. Tommy just can't get a run of luck to pick up any sort of momentum for his season. The latest issue plaguing the Kawi man is a knee problem picked up when he stacked it XXL in turn one at Canada Heights a few weeks back. As well as dealing with the persistent injury, the moto gods have been punishing him in various other ways, too, testing his determination and motivation to battle through.

On paper it would be easy to write him off but once this run breaks expect to see him back on the form he showed early in the season.

The man on the best form in the UK right now has got to be everyone's favourite Irishman, Martin Barr. Barty holds the red plate in every national series in the UK as of now on his MX2 Buildbase Honda. Leading the British Masters, MX Nationals and Maxxis British championship, he takes the series lead of the latter back to his homeland for round four in a couple of weeks which will be sure to prove popular with the natives.

With new bikes coming out and the Hard Enduro season restarting it's a good time to be an enduro rider. Just no so much so if you're one of Britain's leading enduro starlets Jamie McCanney or Brad Freeman. No matter what time of the year injuries suck.

For Freeman a shoulder injury and subsequent surgery have punched a ruddy great hole in his 2016 season. But with keyhole trickery-pokery to repair his injured shoulder having gone well there's still a chance of keeping his European Enduro Championship title hopes alive. If fit and well to race the next round he might still just be able to do enough to net the overall European title. Here's hoping so.

Another Brit in the wars is luckless Jamie McCanney. Out with a broken foot, he didn't

cartwheel his Yamaha down a gnarly world championship extreme test, instead an awkward foot-down moment while preppin' for the GP of Greece resulted in busted bones in his right foot. With EnduroGP events coming thick n' fast Jamie's likely to be out of action for the upcoming Finnish and Swedish events.

Finally, Jonny Walker's still not 100 per cent with the fractured Fibula he picked up at the penultimate round of the SuperEnduro series ruling him out of Erzberg. Heal up quick lads!

Picking a pesky clash-with-deadline date this year's Erzberg will be done and dusted for another season as you read this with the 22nd running of the event a kind of Europe vs USA contest. Graham Jarvis, Taddy Blazusiak, Alfredo Gomez and Mario Roman lead the Euro charge against Cody Webb, Colton Haaker and a few others. With serious bragging rights up for grabs it's anyone's guess who'll take the win. But with Romanians not too far away whoever nails the top step of the podium will have a full six weeks to get ready for Romania where once again Brits have filled the entry.

On the machinery front KTM recently became the first to lift the covers from their 2017 model woods weapons with the mighty orange machines featuring a raft of serious upgrade and updates. In fact KTM have gone all-in and revamped their bikes with lights, while also reading themselves for the start of the fuel-injection two-stroke era. Next up it's Sherco who'll unveil their new offerings followed by Beta and Husky.

Gas Gas have also re-joined the party with production of their enduro machines now up and running with bikes now with the UK importers. Missing a year of production Gasser have taken the smart move of being the first to start producing 2017 models, rather than being last to offer 2016 bikes. More than just 2017 model machines, the fact that Gas Gas is back in the game is of significant importance to the enduro world.





# WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

## MXGP2 XBOX ONE AND PS4 GAMES

MXGP The Official Motocross Videogame is a huge hit up here at DBR with many a long moto bashed out on the controllers of the office PS3. As big fans of the game we were all absolutely pumped to hear that an all-new edition was on its way – MXGP2 – but much less so when we learned that it would only be available on the latest generation of consoles. We are of course just poor northern folk without an adequate amount of pennies to splash out on a PS4 or Xbox One – boohoo!

Although we've got nowt to play them on we're currently in possession of six copies of the game – three for PS4 and another three for Xbox One – thanks to the game's publisher PQube and because we're a good bunch we're gonna share the wealth and give 'em all away to you guys in a series of free to enter competitions.

Your first chance to win is by answering an oh-so easy question and then sending your answer and contact details to us through the post to the address below. Yep, it's old school but we'll be

backing it up with more modern Facebook and Twitter comps so we've got all bases covered.

The question that we want you to answer is this – which riders from the 2015 MXGP season grace the cover of the new game?

- Is it: A) Dave Thorpe and Andre Malherbe
- B) Tony Cairoli and Ryan Villopoto
- C) Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean
- D) Zig and Zag

If you think you know the answer then write it down on a scrap of paper along with your name, address, phone number and which console you'd like the game for then stick it in an envelope and send it to us at – MXGP Comp, DBR Towers, 41 Northgate, White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 3PA before the official closing date of July 1.

# WIN! WIN! WIN!

# WIN! WIN! WIN!

# WIN! WIN! WIN!

# WIN! WIN! WIN!

## SPEEDWAY GP TICKETS



The Adrian Flux British FIM Speedway Grand Prix will once again roll into Cardiff's Principality Stadium on July 9 where current British World Champion Tai Woffinden will be looking for a real home advantage as he hunts down his third world title.

From dedicated speedway followers, to families seeking some high octane entertainment, the exhilarating non-stop action of the SGP circus never fails to thrill and ensures spectators return year after year – 500cc bikes with no brakes means nothing is predictable with the winner only being decided in the last second of the suspense-fuelled evening.

Tai will return this year in a bid to become only the second British rider to win in front of home fans after Chris Harris' victory at the stadium in 2007.

We have three pairs of tickets for the Adrian Flux British FIM Speedway Grand Prix 2016 up for grabs and to be in with a chance of winning the very first pair we want you to answer this question...

Who is the current Speedway World Champion?

- A: Tai Woffinden
- B: Wai Toffinden
- C: Dai Coffington
- D: Boaty McBoatface

If you know it then write it down on a scrap of paper along with your name, address and phone number then stick it in an envelope and send it to us at – SGP Comp, DBR Towers, 41 Northgate, White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 3PA before the official closing date of July 1.

There will be more chances to win on Facebook and Twitter but if you're not feeling lucky you can always book your 2016 Adrian Flux British SGP tickets online at [bit.ly/speedway-2016](http://bit.ly/speedway-2016) or by calling 0844 858 8879. Calls cost 6p per minute plus your phone company's access charge. The ticket price is subject to a transaction fee of £1.95 per order. Tickets will also be available on the day from the WRU Box office on Westgate Street, Cardiff or through Ticketline.



# FULL GAS!

## WORLD CHAMPIONS AND X-GAMES GOLD MEDALLISTS GET READY FOR GOODWOOD . . .

Goodwood Action Sports (GAS) returns to the Goodwood Festival of Speed for its fifth successive year with a veritable who's who of action sport stars all ready for four days of two-wheel fast-paced, high-octane motorised and pedal-powered fun and games. The disciplines of Freestyle Motocross, BMX Dirt, Trials and Mountain Bike will be superbly represented by athletes at the very top of their game in three hour-long shows each day from June 23 - 26.

The giants of the FMX world such as Jamie Squibb – the UK's most successful FMX rider and the only Brit to be selected for the Nitro Circus Live line-up – and X-Games gold medallist Edgar Torronteras from Spain as well as uber-cool Czech Petr Pilat will showcase their breath-taking skills as they whip and backflip their way through a set of high-flying and jaw-dropping tricks.

But the FMX boys won't have the Arena all to themselves because, as the title suggests, GAS encompasses all manner of action sports and Mountain Bike and BMX legends from all over the globe will engage in battle to be crowned the King of GAS in a jump-filled, double-lane course. British former World Champion Kye Forte will join Americans Chris Doyle, Mike 'Hucker' Clark and leading MTB trials star Chris Doney.

And, if that's not enough, rounding off the big-name action is the legendary multiple British and World Trials Champion, Dougie Lampkin MBE. Fresh from winning his 10th Scottish Six-Day Trial Lampkin, together with Alexz Wigg, is set to take the considerable Goodwood crowd with him as he scales a range of seemingly impossible hand-carved obstacles in the main GAS Arena.

Partnered by the TomTom Bandit – an action camera ably demonstrated throughout the Arenacross Tour earlier this year – GAS alone takes up an incredible four acres of the world famous West Sussex venue. The area takes some six weeks to build and a weighty amount of soil to the tune of 10,000-plus tonnes is shipped in.

For those wanting hands-on experience of off-road, a hugely popular aspect is the GAS Experience Zone. Here adventurers young and old can try out riding an electric or petrol-powered motorcycle for the first time. GAS always attracts sporting stars who just want to hang out and we're hearing rumours that one of the 'greatest of all time' American motocross heroes will be in the Arena – keep an eye on the Goodwood website!

So, whether it's to have-a-go, or catch a show, the GAS Arena is a stage set to impress and put simply – 2016 is revving up to be a mecca for the action sports enthusiast.

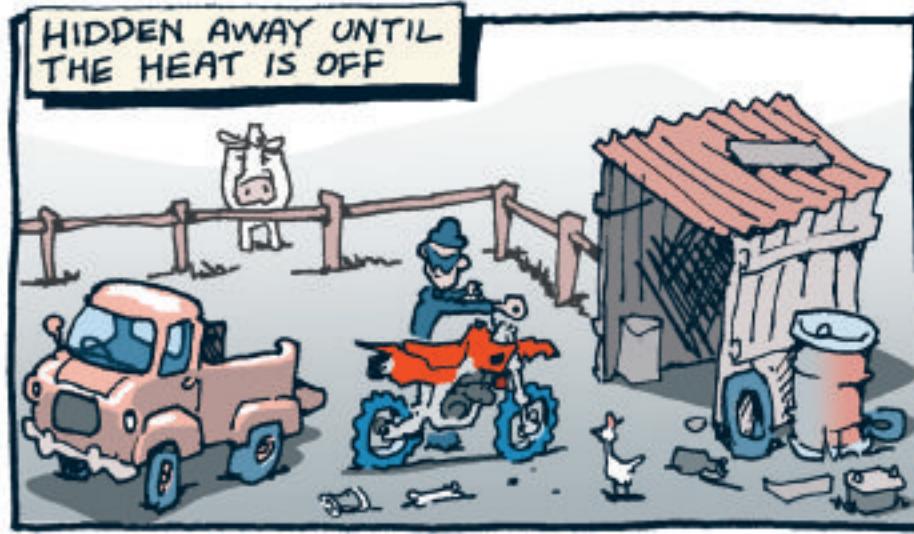
Ticket information is available from [www.goodwood.com](http://www.goodwood.com) or through the ticket office on 01243 755055.

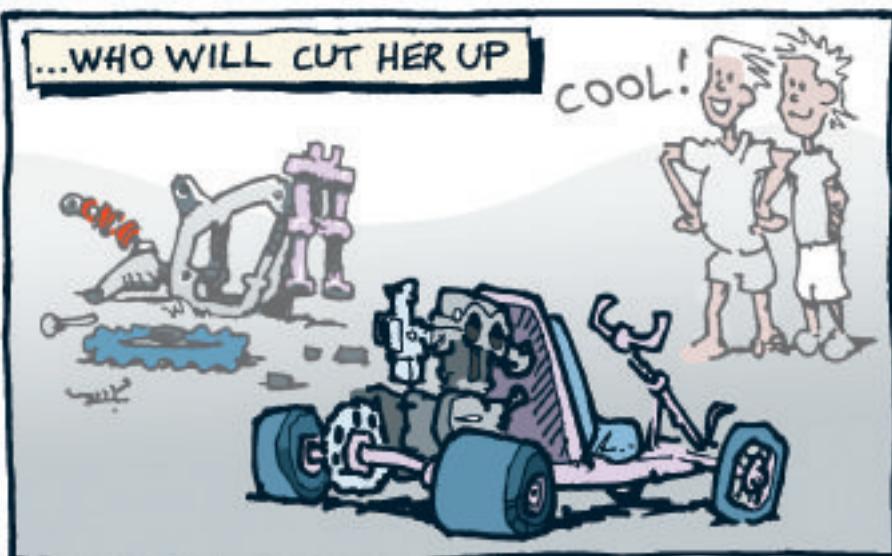
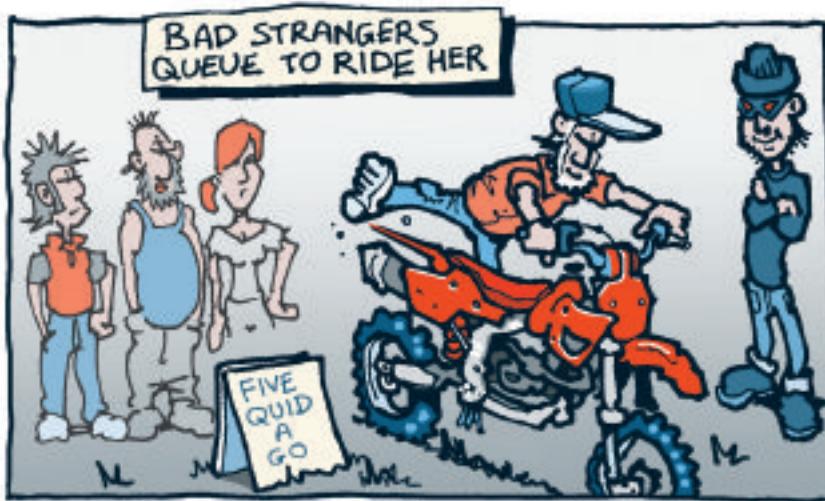
# TAKEN

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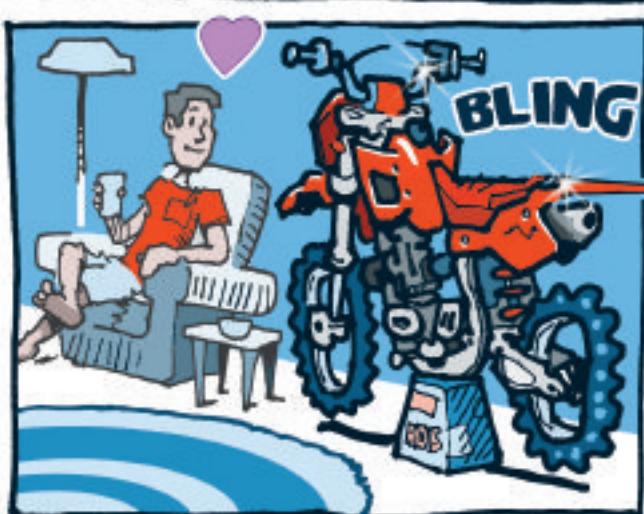


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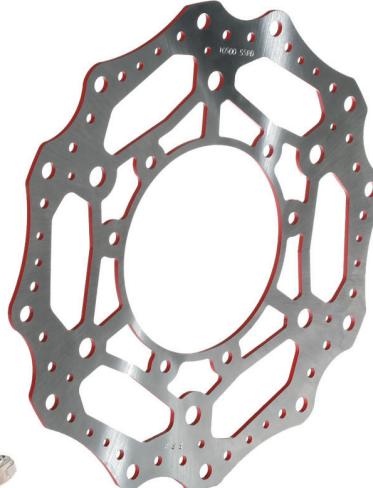


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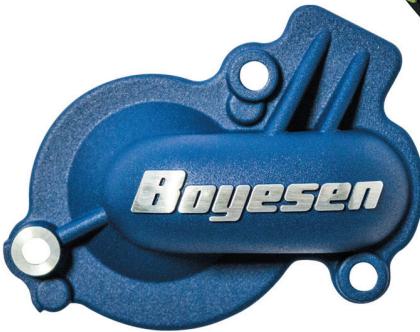


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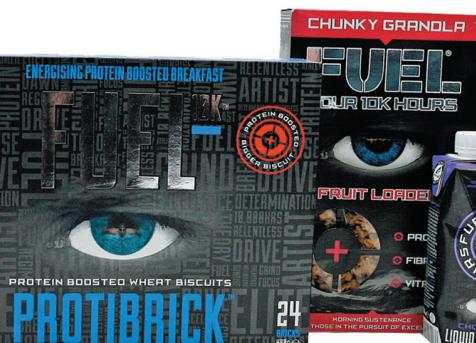


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GRAEME IRWIN

# ACTION hero!

**FOLLOWING A SWITCH TO BUILDBASE HONDA AT THE END OF LAST YEAR, GRAEME IRWIN'S EMERGED AS A SERIOUS FRONT-RUNNER WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO LET IT ALL HANG OUT...**

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

In British motocross at the moment there's probably no-one who comes close to Graeme Irwin in terms of sheer bloody spectacle. Fast and fearless, the 24-year-old from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland is an all-action hero and – while he's definitely calmed down a bit over the last few years – he's still prepared to get a little lairy when required.

"My style's totally natural," he says. "I've never really been trained on how to ride a motocross bike. I think it's just that I'm not scared to hang it out – especially if it's the last lap and I can still get the guy in front."

The first time I interviewed Graeme was in 2009 at the beginning of his second full season in the British championship and, to be honest, it was like pulling teeth. He was 17, shy and struggled to articulate his thoughts. The result was a three page feature with less than a page of text bulked out with lots of pretty pictures.

Well a lot has changed and during the course of our 40-minute Skype call he hardly shuts up. Now married with a young daughter and with seven more years experience under his belt, he's grown into a confident pro who's completely at >>





home under the Buildbase Honda Racing awning.

After three seasons with Neil Prince's Heads & All Threads Suzuki team we all got used to seeing Graeme in yellow but the off-season switch to Dave Thorpe's team seems to have suited him and he's started the year in great form. At the time of our interview he was leading both the Michelin MX Nationals and Pirelli British Masters series and sat third in the Maxxis points table after two rounds.

"There was a deal from Neil for this year but it wasn't as good as the deal from Buildbase Honda and I just felt it was time for a change. Obviously, different teams have different budgets and different goals and I felt with Neil he was happy for me to finish top five in the championship whereas Dave wants me to finish first and he believes that I can – although that's not to say Neil didn't believe in me."

The contrast between his pre-season prep in 2015 – which he spent alone in America – and this year, spent with his new team-mates in Italy, is marked.

"Going to Italy definitely helped my early-season speed. The first race there was my first race with the team and the first race with a new bike and I rode a bit tight. So the first round went a bit steady – I had quite good speed and was battling with Valentin Guillod and he's round about the top 10 in MXGP so I was quite pleased with that.

"The last round of the Italian championship was even better and we weren't far off Coldenhoff, Guillod and all those guys and I beat them one race and in the other we battled right to the flag.

"We spent three weeks there just to get dialled in with the bike and the team and get away from the bad weather. I think that definitely got me ready for the start of the year."

Having the three-time world 500cc champion in his corner is clearly benefitting Graeme and their relationship could be the missing piece of the puzzle he needs to fulfil the potential he first unveiled to a mainland audience when he won the MX2 title in 2007.

"I'm really happy with the team and everything's good so it would be hard to leave there. It's a very professional team and whenever you walk through the paddock you can see it's good. It's the best set-up in the British championship by far. Okay, some of the teams do GPs but they don't bring their full set-up.

"Dave gives me the tools to do the job and lets >>







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me crack on. I think he sees I'm putting the work in – we go out and ride together and he watches. I'm not saying I'm the fastest guy in the world by any means but I'm working closely with him on just the little things – if he thinks I can improve somewhere or be a little quicker somewhere it's more him pointing that out.

"On race day especially you see him walking around the track constantly – it's as if when you make one mistake and you don't want anyone to see it he always sees it. He's that kind of guy. That one moment when you're sitting down in the seat..."

But just how relevant can riding advice be from someone who was world champion 30 years ago?

"Riding technique has changed but what hasn't changed is the desire to win and what

it takes to win and he can see that. And when you've been at the level he was at in motocross I think you can see why some guys are going faster and point out different things. He can see why the fast guys are taking the lines they're taking. It's things like that. He's just got a lot of experience. He's a very intelligent bloke when it comes to motocross."

At the moment there are two riders – Shaun Simpson and Tommy Searle – who are faster than him in the UK and Graeme knows staying with them, let alone beating them, is going to be a big ask. That doesn't mean he doesn't think he can do it though...

"I believe I had the speed in the first race at Canada Heights to beat Shaun or definitely challenge him anyway but I rode a tough race the whole time behind [Tanel] Leok and that

made it really difficult because he's quite a hard guy to pass. I tried a few times to give him a couple of seconds so I could find some lines and come back at him but although I kept getting back on his back wheel couldn't get the pass made.

"I think at the end of the race we were pretty close to Shaun and I believe that if I could have got past Leok I could have put more of a push on – obviously, making the pass would have been something different."

As full-time GP riders Simpson and Searle have a two-fold advantage over Graeme. Racing against the fastest riders in the world forces you to pick up your pace and it also means you do a lot more racing.

"One thing I've achieved in my programme is doing a lot more riding in Belgium and trying to >>>



Irwin yanks the holey in front of the fastest 40 at the Preston Docks round of the MX Nationals



Graeme's style is all natural...



## TEAM-MATES...

... and fierce rivals

Ask any rider how important it is to beat their team-mate and the answer will always be the same – immensely – and with Kristian Whatley on the other CRF450R under the Buildbase Honda awning the on-track rivalry is bound to be fierce.

"Obviously, last year he was doing quite a bit of winning and fair play to him he was very good but I think this year it must be pretty hard for him because I've come onto the team and been quite a bit stronger than him.

"We don't have any problems with each other – I think we're as close as friends off the track as you're going to be with a rival. I get on

with him well and I have a lot of respect for him. It's rule #1 that you've got to beat your team-mate but I concentrate on winning the race which means I've got another 38 riders to beat so I don't really look at him any differently on the track.

"You don't want to be satisfied finishing 39th just because he's 40th. But it's always good to beat your team-mate."



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## BORN TO RACE!

### Keeping it in the family . . .

Graeme comes from a family of die-hard road racers – dad Alan was a top-level professional, big brother Glenn competes in BSB on a factory Ducati for Paul Bird Motorsport and younger brother Andrew races British Supersport.

The brothers all started out riding motocross but, despite the family's preference for slick tyres over knobbly, Graeme's sticking with his first love – although that's not to say he wouldn't do well if he was to make the switch as he demonstrated when he made his road racing debut last year.

"It's always been motocross all the way – my heart's in motocross. There's never been any pressure but I've always been told that if I went to it that I would have been pretty good and at the end of last year I did my first circuit race.

"What I think I enjoyed most about it was spending time with the whole family. I haven't raced with my brothers since we were in the schoolboys. It was the Sunflower Trophy so there were quite a few British Superbike guys there and I finished 10th which was pretty good for my first race. I may do the same race again this year and try and give my brothers a little bit more of a run.

"I rode a Honda 1000 from Wilson Craig and my two brothers rode 600s. The top riders from each class made it to the big race at the end of the day so it was cool to have a race with my brothers. They beat me but if they were as close to me on a motocross bike as I was to them on a road bike I'd be pretty gutted."



ride with the GP guys and going to Italy in the pre-season and doing things like that. Honestly, I think it's hard for us guys who are only doing the British championship [to compete with Searle and Simpson]. Those guys are going to all the GPs, they're riding with guys their speed or who are faster and they're getting pushed on.

"I believe that in a race situation is where you learn the most. You can go practising and be fast but when it comes to a race, that's when you have to bring your A game and I think doing GPs does drag you along if you prepare properly. You're constantly learning.

"I think Cairoli stated that this is the fastest that MXGP has ever been so riders are getting pulled along now. Everybody's working hard and I think Shaun and Tommy definitely have that advantage, then they're coming back to the UK full of confidence.

"In between Lyng and Canada Heights we had four or five weeks of no racing whereas those guys had three GPs and for us you can

definitely see why it could be a disadvantage. So we just have to work that little bit harder to try to stay competitive."

Another factor in the form Graeme's shown this season could very well be the stability – and maturity – that comes from being a married man with a young child.

The family home is currently in Chislehurst in South East London which he shares with his wife Brooke and their eight-month-old daughter Summer.

"Being a father is something I've always wanted to do. It's something you always look forward to in life – being a dad, having a wife. The whole thing has fell in really well and I'm really fortunate and it runs pretty smooth. Brooke is an awesome wife and she kinda looks after me to be honest, she keeps me on the straight and narrow."

Graeme met Brooke, who's from Murrieta in California, during pre-season testing in SoCal with the Heads & All Threads Suzuki >>





team at the beginning of 2014.

"She was a waitress in a restaurant and I just walked in and she fell at my feet! Seriously, I was there with a whole bunch of guys from the team and she was the waitress for our table. There was a bit of craic and banter going on and one thing led to another and I asked for her number and it was all downhill from there!"

With a family relying on him Graeme's got extra motivation to get the job done and he's well aware of his new responsibilities.

"The main focus for us as a family is my racing at the minute and it works well for us all. It's really good for us all. I'm not just riding to earn money for myself now, I've got a family to feed."

"One of the biggest things with having a baby is you have to change your priorities. Before, say, if a GP ride had come up and they said 'we want you to ride for nothing' I'd have taken it and just lived off baked beans but now I have to

think about it a bit more and to be what's best for me it also has to be what's best for my family.

"Don't get me wrong, GPs are where I want to be but it's not easy at the minute to get in there. There are not many opportunities going but if the right opportunity was there then I'd try to take it. As long as you can go and do the job right."

"It's not as if I come from a rich family who's going to give me a load of money to travel around the world so I couldn't do the job for nothing. I'd have to be doing what I'm doing now which costs a lot of money. If I was going to go to GPs and do the job half-hearted then I'd rather stay in Britain but if a team was serious and wanted to get good results then I don't see why I wouldn't."

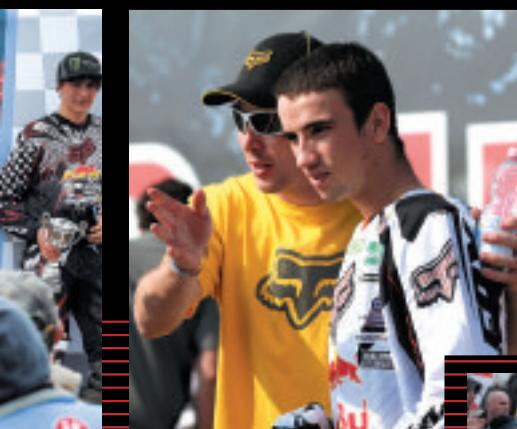
Searle's return to the British championship has definitely raised the profile of the Maxxis series which – potentially – could result in an

offer of a GP ride but Graeme knows he's going to have to start beating the top two.

"I think that now Tommy and Shaun are both in it that the British championship is big enough [to get noticed by a GP team]. Before when it was just Shaun then it was just one guy and if you beat him it could have been like 'maybe Shaun just had a bad race' but now Tommy's in it as well if you went out and beat the both of them then you're going to get noticed. Especially if they were second and third and you beat them straight up."

"I think if you're behind them then it's quite difficult because they're inside the top 10 and it's probably only the top 12 to 14 guys who are getting paid in MXGP."

"Like I said, I believe I had the speed in the first race at Canada Heights and I believe that this year I'm stronger than I've ever been so why not? And Desertram would be a nice place to do it."



## THE STORY SO FAR

### A career catch-up

After winning the 2007 MX2 title for Phil McCullough's Moto One KTM team Graeme lined up for his first full season in the British championship.

He then signed to race for Roger Magee's KTM UK team in 2009 and was still with him in 2010 when his early season promise was cancelled out by a major injury.

"I won the first race of the British championship but I dislocated my shoulder the week before and it was playing up. I went and got the shoulder operation, came back riding after a couple of weeks and the other shoulder got dislocated. I was so unlucky."

"I went and got the operation on that straight away because I knew that season was finished."

Sticking with Roger in 2011, Graeme was chucked in at the deep end with disastrous results.

"I raced the MX1 GPs with Roger. He put me on the 350 at the last minute which is something I really wish he hadn't have done. At the time when he told me I thought it was amazing but I'd just missed a full year of racing and I'm not a big boy – back then especially, it wasn't as if I was one of the strongest guys – and I definitely wasn't ready for that."

"I did a couple of GPs and got to France – St Jean – and broke my neck and that was that season over."

For 2012 he hooked up with Roy Emberson's Yamaha team, dropped back to MX2 and finished fourth in the British championship – despite failing to score at the second round after a big crash.

"At Canada Heights Tonus scrubbed a jump through a puddle – I don't know what he was thinking – and I had nowhere to go and hit his bike and KO'd myself. Clean out."

"Roy was the first guy that ever paid me and it was really good – we had a fun year. I've got a lot of respect for him, he's a good guy. He's as straight as a die."

Despite getting on well with Embo at the end of the season he was on the move again and began a three-year relationship with Neil Prince.

"We definitely didn't have the strongest bike. It was kinda a last-minute move I went with because I thought it could be a stepping stone back to GPs. It was probably one of my worst years until I jumped on the 450 at the end and won a couple of races."

"I signed with Neil again for 2014 on the 450. I just missed out on third by one point in the British championship which was disappointing."

In 2015 he was dogged with mechanical problems during the first part of the year after a difficult pre-season spent in America.

"I did all the pre-season work myself. I got a bike from Suzuki America and went out there alone. It was just me, myself and I. All spares I had to buy myself and it was a difficult start to the year. It just wasn't good preparation."

He came back strong at the end of the season with a string of podium finishes but it was too little, too late.

"It wasn't where I wanted to be and that's when I thought it was time to make a move."





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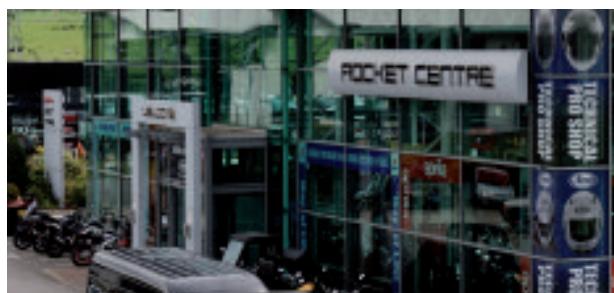
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**2017 KTM ENDURO RANGE**

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The small 125 XC-W motor packs a lot of punch!



**A**n 'outstanding moment' in the history of KTM enduro machines is how the PR team tried to sell it to us at the launch of the 2017 model range and they're probably right to do so too.

Development of the 2017 EXC range has arrived relatively soon off the back of major motocross model changes last year and KTM is making just as many bold statements about their new woods racers. 90 per cent of parts are new and with up to 5kg in weight reductions each of the eight bikes (14 if you count Six Days models) are redesigned. Oh, and the most powerful enduro bike ever – the 500EXC-F – will soon likely overtake the 350F as the biggest-

selling KTM model globally.

There's good news too – chassis changes make them all easier to ride, fast or slow, plus KTM are still fully-committed to two-strokes. Big claims come easily at new model launches but sometimes you have to sit up and take note.

Launched at legendary Les Comes in Cataluña, training ground for many an enduro and rally legend, don't go thinking this is just a makeover for the motocross range with enduro plastics thrown on. Though KTM admits joint Austrian and USA development and changes to the MX range that directly link to the EXC models, they are also equally at pains to tell us these are new bikes – redesigned

specifically for enduro.

"Enduro is the reason why we are here, the core of KTM as a business," says KTM's head of product Joachim Sauer. Phew, in a world increasingly full of KTM road bikes and even a MotoGP project, we're glad to hear that.

From the ground-up the 2017 EXC range has had the kind of redesign that comes along very few times in the lifetime of any bike range. Every model from 125cc 2T to 500cc 4T has a new engine drastically reduced in size and pumping out more power. Chassis' are lighter, stronger and easier to ride and the numbers are impressive – 20 per cent more torsional stiffness, 30 per cent less longitudinal stiffness and 350g >>



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## NO MORE TWO-STROKES? Not on your nelly!

The 200 has been replaced with a 150cc model alongside the 125 – these are now labelled as XC-W models. Two-strokes are still here, still clocking in with huge amounts of development and ready for the future...

The KTM EXC full line-up is still trademark steel tubular frame and largely orange bodywork – some things never change. Eight bikes is still easily the most comprehensive of any manufacturer and includes the core 250/300 EXC 2T models, 250/350/450 and 500 EXC-F 4T models plus two newly monikered 125/150 XC-W 2T models. The news is the 200 two-smoker has been replaced by a 150cc bike and the XC-W models are basically sold as “closed circuit-only” bikes – putting responsibility for road registration onto the customer

and thereby circumnavigating emissions laws.

A lot of this is driven by EU emissions regulations, the two smaller bikes cannot be currently sold as road-homologated bikes. Still fitted with carburettor supplied engines they wouldn't meet the not so far away EU4 regs so, instead of dramatically piping down their performance, KTM has stepped around the loophole and handed over responsibility for getting them registered, should you want to, to you or your dealer. This presents more of a problem in some parts of the world than others – in the UK we should be okay.

Fear not though this is not the beginning of the end for two-stroke enduro bikes. It's only temporary. All the 2T bikes are ready to go with fuel-injection so we will see the end of the carb but fuel-injected 2T engines are the future.



The 300 EXC remains THE bike for fans of Hard Enduro

lighter overall.

Feedback and feel being improved to the rider, changes allow more precision into corners and stability in a straight line, plus less vibration (particularly on the 2T models) between engine and frame. “Ready for a new generation,” KTM tells us and it’s hard not to believe them.

There’s also the buzz phrase being bandied about – mass centralization. In essence the concentration of the bike’s weight around a sweet spot in the centre of the bike (just about where a starter motor ordinarily sits) to help handling, turning ability and rider control. Mass centralization comes from all aspects of the bike working together to complete the whole and that’s something clear from the long list of updates across the EXC range.

There are some saucy, smaller details on the MY17 EXCs too, partly aimed at the perennial targets of lighter, faster bikes that are easier to ride but just as important some are there to make life easier. You can remove the headlight and air filter single-handed now, new triple clamps have four settings for handlebar position to suit the rider, ‘no dirt’ footpegs and gear lever shouldn’t get clogged with crud and a 10mm longer rear brake pedal helps foot control.



All bikes have dramatically smaller and lighter batteries too – at least 1kg lighter (1.2kg on the 4T bikes). Don’t worry though, KTM are “100% sure the battery will always work”. Plus there’s a stronger radiator material and a new mounting position on the inside (frame side) that KTM claims is

“bulletproof” and no longer needs radiator bracing.

Lighter tubular steel>>



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The 250 EXC-F fills the gap between the two-smokers and the big-bore four-poppers

## RIDING IMPRESSIONS...

### 125 XC-W 2T

The 3kg lighter (91kg claimed weight) 125 smoker was the first bike we tested and what a way to start. Super-precise along some of Les Comes' dry and mega-rocky stream beds, the new chassis and suspension work well to help this become the most accurate of weapons. Fast and light.

### 150 XC-W 2T

Did we miss the extra horses of the 200cc engine? Can't say we did in all honesty. The test bike we rode was set-up a little rich for flat-out speed and suffered a little in the technical going with a fluffy throttle but otherwise was just as accurate as the 125 but with a touch more fizz.

### 250 EXC 2T

The bedrock of KTM's enduro range does not disappoint. Still the best middle-ground machine for all-terrain. 2kg lighter, suspension and chassis changes help the 250 in all situations. Sensitive suspension was easily adjusted to suit different riding and terrain.

### 300 EXC 2T

Still the horny beast it has always been and the choice of extreme enduro riders, the 300 is easier to ride than older models, softer delivering in lower revs and the new chassis again giving the rider an easier time of it. A jump up from the 250, you notice it arriving at corners faster, launching out of them stronger but with better throttle feel than older models.

### 250EXC-F

Still mighty impressive and an increasingly popular choice, the 250F weighs 2.5kg less for 2017. The smallest four-stroke in the range is agile and as friendly as your best friend when the going gets tough. Despite sharing so much with bigger 4T bikes, the 250F feels like a half-way house between other models, plugging a gap between the 2T and 4T bikes.

### 350EXC-F

Current the biggest selling bike in the KTM range, with good reason, the 350 now weighs 3.2kg less. Familiar as old socks, it was our excuse to spend time playing with suspension range and it proved 'ready to race' is no idle strapline. New hydro-stop to prevent bottoming works well for our 73kg test pilot. Huge clicker range tailors to a range of body weights and riding levels.

### 450EXC-F

A whopping 5kg weight saving brings the mighty 450 to you as a rider, making it easier to ride and less of an arm-wrencher when tired. Switchable traction and mapping settings are easy to use and flick between. Suspension, again, damps well with the extra speed and weight of the 106kg 450F.

### 500EXC-F

The most powerful enduro bike ever? KTM says so and who'd argue, the 62hp 106kg machine is 5kg lighter than it was and needs treating with respect out on the track. Treat it like the best trail bike ever and you'll reap huge rewards.

frames and lighter swingarms are matched by a lighter WP 'Xplor' PDS-type shock absorber and 48mm forks. A major upgrade to the WP suspension sees both forks and shock losing weight and gaining more progressive settings plus improved 'hydro-stop' to soften those heavy landings.

The shock has a redesigned body, lighter spring, piston design changes and an easy to use clicker adjuster at the bottom of the shock. The WP 48mm forks are not the MX range air forks but conventional sprung units with separate damping adjustment on each side – compression left, rebound on the right. There's an optional click adjuster (standard on the Six Days models) for easier preload adjustment.

Traction control and engine mapping on the four-strokes has a new handlebar mounted switch, simplifying things to just two traction and two maps settings which can be switched on the move. The downside is the map switch is a KTM Power Parts option although comes as standard on the Six Days models.

Four new engines and eight new engine displacements feature the same throttle bodies from the MX bikes with smaller intakes for enduro-specific low-speed response plus a new ECU with faster processors, chiefly to facilitate the tweaked traction control on the four-strokes. The EXC range borrows heavily from the MX range but KTM claims "every part is EXC specific".

Does size matter? It sure does with Junior bikes. KTM's 2017 125 EXC motor is tiny, beyond belief. It's hard to take in just how small the 2kg lighter engine looks sitting in its new frame.

Work on the 125 and 150 engines is centred around smaller, lighter and stronger die-cast crankcases. Considerably more compact, the engines sit up and further back in the frame (closer to that centre of gravity). The extra space allows the starter motor, now standard on the 150 (though a retro-fit option on the 125) to sit underneath the engine, out of harms way and loads neater. There's also improved, 'semi-bleed' jetting which in theory should need changing less often to suit conditions. Brembo hydraulic clutches now feature on the smaller bikes too (was Magura). [>>](#)



48mm WP Xplor forks come as standard across the full range





The 250/300 2T engines have had similar efforts to reduce weight and size while increasing power. Among the details is a new counter-balance shaft, which drastically reduces vibrations from the engine and KTM claims the knock-on to your feet and hands is 50 per cent less vibes than previous models.

It's not just the two-stroke engines that have been scrutinised. The 250 EXC-F is 1.5kg lighter, the all-conquering 350-F a whopping 1.9kg lighter while the 450/500 motors are 2.4kg to the good which amounts to half the overall weight loss on those two models.



Another fact banded about on the launch was, since the year 2000, the bigger capacity 4T engine has lost 5kg and gained 12hp. Amazing work from the engine department.

The 500EXC-F now makes a monster 62hp – the most power KTM has put out in a production bike. The Austrian manufacturer also expects the Big Bertha 500 to take over the mantle from the 350 as the biggest selling bike in its line-up with the release of the 2017 models. Highly unlikely in little, old Britain but in Australia and America where everything's bigger and larger capacity bikes are popular this new,

easier to ride 500 EXC-F is likely to take over the mantle.

A neat but super-practical detail are the 'textured' engine cases which scuff-up less, doing away with the boot rub marks inside the foot controls and so keep your bike looking sweet for longer.

Overall, the changes to the 2017 KTM enduro range are huge. Dramatic reductions in engine proportions but still with increases to power. No air-forks like MX bikes but lighter, better performing with improved range and control whether you're on a special test or ripping

round a trials section.

Chassis changes are identical to the MX range in bringing more feel and confidence. Detail changes are many and varied and mostly positive while the downsides are few – the starter motor fitted to the 150 could well do with being standard on the 125. The standard 4T bikes all come without the handlebar mounted map switch though it is standard on the Six Days models. Six Days models are available on all bikes except the XC-Ws by the way and all models should begin to arrive at dealers in June.



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### 125 XC-W

**Displacement:** 124.8cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 54 x 54.5mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Mikuni TMX 38  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.471 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 370mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 9.5 litres  
**Weight:** 91kg

### 150 XC-W

**Displacement:** 143.9cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 58 x 54.5mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Mikuni TMX 38  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.471 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 370mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 9.5 litres  
**Weight:** 91.5kg

### 250 EXC

**Displacement:** 249cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 66.4 x 72mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Mikuni TMX 38  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 370mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 9.5 litres  
**Weight:** 100kg

### 300 EXC

**Displacement:** 300cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 72 x 72mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Mikuni TMX 38  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 370mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 9.5 litres  
**Weight:** 100kg

### 250 EXC-F

**Displacement:** 249.91cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 78 x 52.3mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (42mm throttle body)  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 355mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 8.5 litres  
**Weight:** 103kg

### 350 EXC-F

**Displacement:** 349.7cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 88 x 57.5mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (42mm throttle body)  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 355mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 8.5 litres  
**Weight:** 104kg

### 450 EXC-F

**Displacement:** 449.3cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 95 x 63.4mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (42mm throttle body)  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 355mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 8.5 litres  
**Weight:** 106kg

### 500 EXC-F

**Displacement:** 510.4cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 95 x 72mm  
**Transmission:** 6 gears  
**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (42mm throttle body)  
**Front suspension:** WP-USD, XPLOR 48  
**Rear suspension:** WP XPLOR PDS shock  
**Suspension travel front/rear:** 300/310mm  
**Front/rear brakes:** Disc brake 260/220 mm  
**Wheel base:** 1.482 ± 10mm  
**Ground clearance:** 355mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Fuel capacity:** 8.5 litres  
**Weight:** 106.5kg



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Words by Jeff Loughlin Photos by Peter Kutalek  
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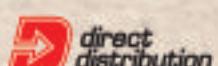
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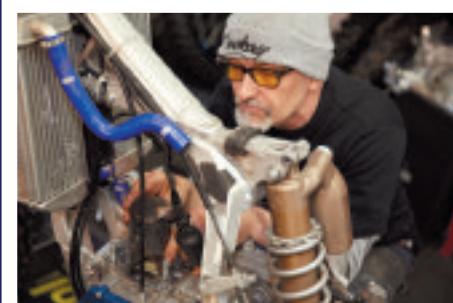
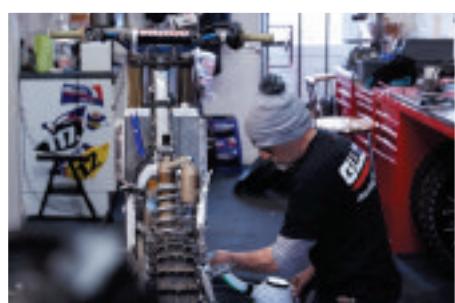
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Bob gets to work in the GL12 workshops on one of his beloved two-strokes



**B**ob Buchanan is most definitely 100 per cent old school – old school in the way he goes about racing and old school in the way he's not scared to voice his opinion about the sport or the people who run it. We caught up with Bob to get his thoughts about pretty much everything from topping the podium in Talavera to the merits of having plastic flowers in your awning...

**DBR:** So Bob, how did you get into motocross?

**BB:** "When I was a kid I road raced into my teenage years and as everybody does I got into accidents and crashes and stuff so I gave it all up and started a Honda dealership in Bath instead."

**DBR:** For road bikes or MX bikes?

**BB:** "Bath is a motocross town. Lots of boys came into the shop wanting work done on crossers. A mechanic I knew from Hartwells also rode motocross and he was a member of the local club so I used to go there with him. I used to get a lot of the boys from the club coming in to the shop on a Saturday and I would get them spares and stuff."

**DBR:** Was it all two-strokes back then?

**BB:** "Oh yeah. There were a few four-strokes racing but back then it was mostly all two-strokes. Air-cooled, they were just transitioning to water-cooled. A lot of the business there and a lot of the people I was talking to were all racing motocross so I got involved. I eventually became chairman of the Bath Club going to all the meetings and I started a team."

**DBR:** So how did GL12 come together?

**BB:** "How did it begin? I saw what an obstacle money was – people can't afford to race without help. There are a lot of riders who have the money for it so they do it but it doesn't make them any good. There are also a lot of people with the talent that can't take part because they haven't got any money or help. We've got a few of those riders..."

**DBR:** You mean it's all financial?

**BB:** "Yeah, exactly that. We have a trade stand at the meetings – we're in the business, we're in the sport and so we thought we'd put something together and help a few people out. I started off with a local sidecar team who lived close to us, then Brian Wheeler who lives just up the hill joined us and we started like that."

We called it GL12 because we all lived in GL12. It was initially set up to help local people that couldn't get on through lack of finance."

**DBR:** Did locals get involved?

**BB:** "Oh yeah. Everybody that works on the team and around us now are all locals. It's not just about helping people but giving them the chance to help themselves."

**DBR:** How did you get involved with MXGP? I know you trade there but how did having the team involved come about?

**BB:** "Well, TM put a bit of pressure on Giuseppe Longo. KTM and Husqvarna showed interest too but it was TM who really wanted to promote two-strokes as that's what they make. Whether it's the Italian connection working or not, I don't know."

**DBR:** It probably has something to do with that...

**BB:** "The third tier – that's the old MX3 class – was dead on its feet. Nobody was watching it and nobody was entering it so they dropped MX3 and replaced it with EMX300 – conveniently based around 300cc two-strokes. I say conveniently because TM are the only ones who make a 300cc two-stroke MX bike >>

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Bob has a lot of time for Lewis Gregory and rates his skills highly



– all the others make 250s. So that came about and I thought 'right, I'm coming to these meetings anyway so it's not going to hurt to chuck a two-stroke bike on the truck and give a local lad a go at it'."

**DBR:** Is that how Lewis Gregory got involved?

**BB:** "Gregory was just packing up – he'd finished because he couldn't get any help. Rob Hooper – who had been helping him – was not involved in the sport at that point although he's since come back and so Lewis was riding a second-hand two-stroke 125 that he bought himself. He loves two-strokes so I offered him the ride."

**DBR:** A match made in heaven!

**BB:** "Well, yeah. Initially he looked at me and said, 'yeah, I'm really interested and I'd love to do it but how much is it going to cost me?', and I said, 'absolutely nothing, just turn up and ride'. I think he thought I was mental."

**DBR:** That's pretty rare these days...

**BB:** "Well, it just doesn't happen, does it? So that's how that came about – Lewis was without a ride in any two-stroke series and I was without a rider and that was that. Then we won the second GP we ever did."

**DBR:** Did that shock you? Seriously, did you think 'what's going on here'?

**BB:** "Well, we went to Bulgaria for the first ever EMX300 round with a 250 because we didn't really know what was going on – nobody knew what to expect. TM had paid Davide Guarneri a fortune to spend the winter testing their bike and they'd hired Samuele Bernardini to race it. They wanted that title badly."

**DBR:** They thought they were going to win it?

**BB:** "It was their series, their EMX300 two-stroke series, so they were going to win it. That was that, come hell or high water, they were going to win it.

"So we all turned up with our 250s or whatever although a few kids – well, KTM actually – took it a bit more seriously. They had Marco Maddi with a 300cc KTM. We were running right about eighth while they cleared off and won but we knew what we were doing after that. We came home and we had a re-think and we went out in the second round in Talavera and beat them."

**DBR:** That must have been a real shock for them.

**BB:** "Yeah, the rest of the paddock loved it and for me it was unbelievable. I've been trying hard for 30 years and we finally did it. As you know there's one race on Saturday, one race on Sunday. We won the race on Saturday and that is still my best moment in motocross – it doesn't matter what happens after that – your first win is great."

**DBR:** What did you do?

**BB:** "I phoned home. I phoned Rose and I couldn't talk. After about 10 minutes, I was blubbering on the phone and I can remember saying 'he won'. I couldn't believe it, I still couldn't believe it then and that was probably an hour after it happened. Lee said to me, 'I don't care what happens, if I go down, if me heart fails, just prop me against the wall – I just want to see the boy go over the line. We've been trying to do this for 30 years'. Brian Wheeler sent me a text saying 'you've peaked too early'.

"I stood on the podium and I'm looking down and there's Steve Turner and a bunch of other team owners and I'm standing where they've never stood. It's not something you can buy."

>>

**DBR:** What do you put that down to, though? Your experience from road racing on two-strokes perhaps?

**BB:** "It's being a two-stroke man. Knowing what you wanted to do and knowing how to do it but also knowing the right people to talk to and which advice to take. I came away from Bulgaria and spoke to a few people who knew their stuff, picked their brains and put it together and built a package."

**DBR:** TM and KTM, they must have been horrified? Never mind Yamaha being shocked...

**BB:** "Oh yeah, but you see the Yamaha is the same bike. I'm working with a frame that's already old and then the engine's from 2002 so it's a 14-year-old engine. The chassis was changed from steel to aluminium in 2006 so the bike is a 10-year-old frame with a 14-year-old engine in it. After we won in Talavera in Spain the next round was Matterley Basin in England.

"TM came with a fair number of mechanics and we went out and won the first race there as well. They had a bloke stood by my tent on the off chance that we might take the top off this engine so they could have a look in it so we didn't. Everyone said the race on Sunday was the best race that weekend because Samuele Bernardini and Lewis were gone from the rest of the field but they were glued together – they

must have changed places 40 times in that race.

"We won the first race with Bernardini second, then he won the second race second with us behind him. So they were equal on points but because Samuele had won the second race he got the overall on equal points. I have never seen Lewis so disappointed to get a second place trophy at a GP. He didn't want it. He just didn't want it. He wouldn't lift it up for the cameraman or anything – he just held it..."

**DBR:** How does it make you feel that these manufacturers have really deep pockets and you have a very limited budget?

**BB:** "I haven't got any budget. I haven't got a budget at all. I spend what money I've got on it. It's not a question of having a budget. It's just a question of spending what I make at the GPs..."

**DBR:** So the more people that come and support you by buying from you, the more money you can spend?

**BB:** "Yeah, that kind of thing. That's what it is. You're funding it out of revenue. I haven't got a budget. I'm funding it out of the revenue I make at the GPs."

**DBR:** So do you have to work harder because you haven't got a big budget?

**BB:** "That's right. There's people doing it on nothing – there are fathers supporting their sons doing it. All right, they're not winning but they are still trying hard. The problem is to try and win it with little budget. Let's face it, it's not going to happen."

"One of the FIM boys, ACU bloke Chris Warren – he does the blue flags and a lot of the official work at the GPs – came over to me after we won in Talavera and said 'you do realise what you've just done? You've won a race at a GP out the back of a trade stand'. There's no awning, there's no team truck, there's no anything. We've got an easy-up on the side of the trade stand."

**DBR:** But that's all you need...

**BB:** "It doesn't matter how good the awning is, how nice the flowers are on the table or what wine you've got for the VIPs to drink if you don't win. Win first and then do all that. Spend the money on the bike. It's all about racing. Who wants to go and not win?"

**DBR:** There's no doubting your passion to win but what about this year? You've got two riders this time...

**BB:** "Well, I think the best two riders because that also makes a difference. You see, I could build the best bike in the world but if the bloke



Bob reckons Ando is all 'blood and guts'!

doesn't ride it properly or he hasn't got the same heart or commitment that I've got, I'm wasting my time. The point is surrounding yourself with people with the same goals and the same ideals. Lewis is old school, he's a motocross fan, I'm a motocross fan and we are in it because we love being in it – we like the sport. He's an extremely naturally talented rider. Brad Anderson is just blood and guts."

**DBR:** And always has been.

**BB:** "Yeah, he's just blood and guts. You know when Ando's completed a race that wherever he finished was the best place he could possibly do with that bike on that day. He doesn't leave anything out there. Lewis – on his day – he's as fast as anyone but his biggest problem is that he doesn't realise how good he is. When Lewis Gregory realises that he's one of the best, then watch out because he'll be even better."

"When we went to see Yamaha we were talking about it and I said I was going to have two riders. They said, 'why do you need two riders?'. Well, that was the season that they started off with Van Horebeek as their number one and rode Roman Febvre as number two. Van Horebeek got injured and Febvre won it. If they hadn't had two riders then they wouldn't have won it. And I didn't win it last year

because I was without Lewis Gregory and I missed two rounds – you need two riders."

**DBR:** How happy are Yamaha with the way things are going at the moment? They must be thrilled...

**BB:** "They must be but they aren't telling me. Yamaha UK weren't interested this year but luckily Eric Hagan at Yamaha Europe has a different opinion so I'm out there on Yamahas again – thanks to him for that."

"The guy that ran Yamaha Europe in 2014 pulled me aside in Lommel and said, 'I've got no idea what you are doing and no interest in how you are doing it but would you keep doing it please'. They are obviously happy. Any manufacturer is happy to see their bike topping the podium."

**DBR:** What's your approach to the team line-up then?

**BB:** "Well we started with Lewis three years ago and I'll stick with Lewis for as long as he wants to do it – he's got a ride, he's my rider."

**DBR:** And a good one...

**BB:** "He's confident and that's the thing. Ando is on a roll. The riders are up there so that always puts the pressure on us to give them the machinery to do it which I think we've got.

Everybody needs a bit of luck though – Yentel Martens didn't win the title last year because he had a silly crash and broke his wrist so Maddi won it with solid results. This year we're going to win it – I wouldn't do it if I didn't think we were going to win it."

"Lewis and Ando are old school. They are not young men. Lewis is 30 and Brad is 35. They know what it's like. They've been doing it for a long time and they've seen it all."

**DBR:** So there are no more surprises...

**BB:** "Ando was second at Hawkstone at the international there this year and he was second at Preston Docks in the first round of the MX Nationals. He's 35. Now, fair play to him and all power to Ando for being up there but he shouldn't be there. There should be people beating him by now."

"Where are the young kids? There aren't any. Last year I had a look and there were four kids who came out of the 85cc Big Wheel class into the 125s in Europe and I had the fastest one – Brett Pocock. But none of those four English kids ever qualified for a race in the European 125s which means the best crop of English kids in 2015 were not fast enough to get into any race in Europe. This year there isn't even one I'd consider taking which is why I've got Slade Tressler who's an American.

>>





"I met him at the GPs obviously because he was doing the Honda 150 cup but he hated the four-stroke and wanted to get back on his 85cc two-stroke – his Supermini. He's quite a tall kid now and he can ride the big bikes so when I was looking for a 125 rider and asked 'are you're going to come over again this season?' he said 'if I've got a ride, I'd love to'. I said, 'you've got a ride' and that's how we hooked up with that."

"Yeah, I'd like to bring young British kids on but until such time as something sparks in somebody there's no point in me putting time and effort on something that is not going to work. Brett Pocock rode his heart out. He tried, he was unlucky, got injured. I've no doubt at all if Brett had stayed fit, he would have qualified for a race by the end of the year."

**DBR:** Was he just lacking experience?

**BB:** "Yeah, the thing you've got is the British Youth Nationals are run on small UK tracks in front of not a lot of people so there's very little atmosphere. You're asking someone to go from a small track like Pontrilas on an 85 to Arco di Trento for the first round of EMX125 where 20,000 people are watching – it must be terrifying for them. Not only do they have to cope with the new surroundings but then they have to try and race a motocross bike too."

"The French kids and the Dutch kids are brought up with it – they ride on the big tracks all the time. The Dutch championship meetings are full of spectators and they have the kids classes there so their preparation is much better."

"I saw Davy Pootjes on an 85 at the first round of the Dutch championship about three years ago and he walked into the pits like he was a rock star – he was signing autographs and everything. With that kind of experience moving up to GPs is just a breeze for those guys..."

**DBR:** How do we get British lads to be able to do that?

**BB:** "That's the \$64,000 question..."

**DBR:** Is the support needed from the manufacturers, or from the ACU, or who? Who puts the money in?

**BB:** "That's the point. Nobody puts any money in, do they? There isn't any money available. I have been asked this question so many times and I always give the same answer – I firmly believe there are kids in England that are fast enough. There has to be. We always used to have them."

"You've got to get away from the culture of the teams taking riders because their parents

can afford to pay for them to ride. That's not the right attitude – you need kids with the desire, the application. You watch these Dutch kids and they are out on Sunday morning running around the track. They want it. It's in their blood. You see the way some of them train – it's fantastic to watch."

**DBR:** We must have British lads like that but they've just not been given the chance.

**BB:** "Yeah, but they can't get on the track. They can't get on the bikes because it's all about money. If we don't change it the only people you are ever going to see on the tracks are people whose parents have got the money to pay for them to be there."

**DBR:** So where do you think the UK stands on the national circuit now?

**BB:** "Where is the UK in European motocross? We're a third world country. At the moment we've got the last of a generation – I think we've got Shaun Simpson, Max Anstie, Tommy Searle etc but after that... Conrad's riding well at the moment and there are a couple coming but there's not a whole crop of them. An injury here and an injury there and we're not in it. I mean France could have picked three or four teams that could have won the Nations last year. Jordi Tixier was not in the French Nations team and



he was the current MX2 world champion."

**DBR:** What do you make of the flyaway rounds of the MXGP?

**BB:** "It's always upset me as a trader because I can't go. That's not as selfish a comment as you might think because when the flyaway rounds are on there's nothing going on in Europe. Europe is the beating heart of GP motocross – that's where everything is. But every round that MXGP takes overseas takes money out of European motocross and it needs all the money it can get at the minute."

**DBR:** So you think they should change those rounds to European rounds then?

**BB:** "Yes. Or, you could run the European series – well some of the rounds of the European series – in Europe while the flyaway rounds are on. So you've got big meetings happening in Europe while the flyaways are on."

**DBR:** If there was a two-stroke world championship would you be able to do it?

**BB:** "Not a chance. No."

**DBR:** Not even with help?

**BB:** "It's not even remotely possible. For a lot of the other riders in the GPs it's not possible either so although he's trying to take the show

around the world it's not the full show."

**DBR:** So it's at the expense of some of the full spectacle as well...

**BB:** "Of course. It's kind of like he'll take the tour away for two or three months or whatever and we are just expected to be waiting here when they get back. What are we supposed to do in that time? You're not going to earn revenue to pay for our racing or give your sponsors exposure. What can we do? There are no big races to go to and nobody will put one on because there are no big names to race. Yeah, he's trying to push the sport into other parts of the world to reach other markets but something always loses out."

**DBR:** Do you ever think you'd like things to go back to 'On Any Sunday' type racing with just a bike and van?

**BB:** "Simple, old school, yeah."

**DBR:** Cheap racing...

**BB:** "That's the other thing. I know at EMX300 level the flipping engines ain't cheap. For your club rider though – your amateur rider – when you blow out the top end of your two-stroke you can rebuild it for a couple of hundred quid. Four-strokes – a couple of thousand. Your average Joe can't afford the repairs on the

four-strokes.

"People want to get back to old school. They want to throw the bike in the back of the van, go out, have a race, come back home, clean the filter, clean the bike and put some juice in and then come out again next week. Long may that continue."

**DBR:** Has much changed around the pits then – other than the new O'Neal kits and Jesse James team wear?

**BB:** "Well we look good. I'm one of those people that think it doesn't matter and you know that – I'll spend the money inside the bike but I've seen a few photos of us in it and I've had good comments about it off people who know about these things. The kit is cool and we're looking like a proper team. Not only are we now beating them on a track – we are beating them in the media."

**DBR:** And in the paddock...

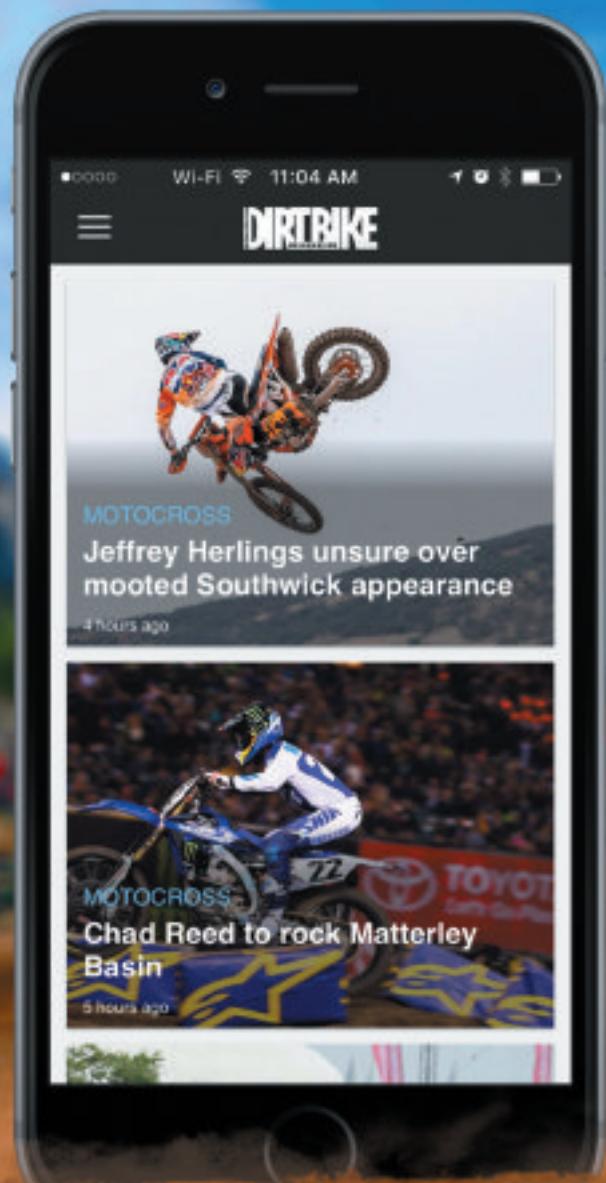
**BB:** "Yeah, yeah. But if I ever have plastic flowers on a table in my awning I want you to shoot me."

**DBR:** Consider it done...

**BB:** "Cheers! And thanks to all the sponsors for their help this year."

A dynamic, high-angle photograph of a dirt bike race. In the foreground, a group of riders on dirt bikes are lined up at the starting line, revving their engines. The track is a reddish-brown dirt surface. In the background, a large, multi-tiered stadium is packed with spectators. The stadium is surrounded by lush green trees and majestic, snow-capped mountains under a clear blue sky.

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# iCoach

Among a plethora of other tasks your iPad can now help you ride better. We travelled to California and back to talk to Scottish trainer and former racer Chris Hay about his involvement with LITPro and how the software is making data desirable and why motocross TV coverage could change forever...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



**L**ITPro has been around for a little while and the likes of Ryan Dungey, Jason Anderson and Ken Roczen can be spotted with a strange contraption – a 'black box' – on their lids during the supercross campaign.

It's a sign of the times and how a sport where tenths or inches never carried as much importance as in road or car racing can now be finitely recorded, analysed and corrected. Gone are the days of a mate holding a shaky video camera. Thanks to a receiver, portable device, 3 or 4G coverage and a willing interpreter of the information – LITPro has allowed motocross and supercross athletes to be more precise than ever.

The natural ethos of motorsport encourages ingenuity to seek the smallest competitive advantage and now riders have an asset that turns the technology tables on themselves and

goes beyond blood test results, a diet plan, fitness charts and even video capture tools like Dartfish.

In terms of TV, LITPro and similar systems could revolutionise coverage. We're used to seeing RPM, speed, track positions and even lean angles in F1 and MotoGP but motocross will add another dimension with jump distances, airtime and – in keeping with the ratio of man-machine of the sport – measurements on the g-force and heart rate of the athletes.

Back in January we visited Lake Elsinore where 33 year old Scot Chris Hay has a house just a short distance from the historic town centre. It's also his professional base since he allowed his own British Enduro Championship winning boots to become dusty. Hay has been located here for 10 years now and during our visit the majority of the Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki team are resident for the month training and riding. Hay has been helping

Tommy Searle and Vsevolod Brylyakov and also using the Grand Prix duo to run more tests with LITPro around tracks like Pala and other renowned sites in SoCal.

He gets out his iPad and gives us a tour so we can see what all the fuss is about. We review one of Searle's sessions from the previous day and watch the former world championship runner-up as a dot on the screen going through laps, times, jumps and lines. It seems like a video game – a mix of a graphically-realistic map, various colours, digits and scales. It is fascinating to chart Searle's progress as he goes through his moto, getting faster and better and altering his trajectory.

Things become more graphic when Hay swipes through to Michael Leib's data from the 2015 Oakland supercross. "This is the way the lap was set-up and there is a lot of G-force in supercross because of the big landings," he explains as Leib circulates the track map.



If you've been wondering what those little black boxes on riders' helmets are... well, now you know

Oakland was grim for the ex-Grand Prix rider. "He broke his tib-fib and talus navicular in one go," says Hay who was working closely with Leib during 2015.

"Forces can be anything from 8-10G and then more if you have a crash," Hay continues. "He was at 22.4G when he fell and that was coming through his head so the actual impact was greater – something had to go. He seat-bounced a rhythm section wrongly and had to eject and landed into the fourth jump. You can see he was going for a fast lap because his heart rate goes up to 180. Everybody is different but it usually hovers around 180-181."

It is gripping – if grim – viewing as the red 'dot' suddenly stops, wobbles and the other figures go through the roof. "He crashes and the G-Force spikes and his heart rate peaks at 190 as the pain hits. You can almost feel it. You have conclusive proof there of what is happening with the athlete. I then turned it off at that point."

With iPad still in hand we ask Chris to take us through 'what', 'how' and 'why' something like LITPro will trump anything a standard GPS watch can do to assist training and development and why aspiring racers have taken notice.

**DBR:** So what is the rider wearing? A unit on his lid?

**CH:** "And a heart rate monitor. It is all linked by Bluetooth. There is talk further down the line of having more hardware but at the moment it works really well."

**DBR:** The unit transmits the telemetry?

**CH:** "All it does is record data and then after your session you can upload the data into the programme and analyse it. So if you go to a practice track – or even do a race – you can come in and see what you have done. Depending on the length of time you are on the track it can take between five and 10 minutes to upload and you can make a new track as well."

**DBR:** So what do you have on the iPad?

**CH:** "There are two Apps. The first is the Sync App but the main thing is LITPro. It stores every session you have done. You can set the track map and it shows the warm-up laps, top speed, average speed, distance around the track (in metres or feet), total air time, average G-force and peak G-force that is measured by impact. If you land hard or hit a big bump then it will measure it."

**DBR:** I can see you've broken the track into five segments there...

**CH:** "Yeah and the green line is his fastest. You ride the track for the first time and then just create it and split it up."

**DBR:** So if you arrive to a British Championship race or a GP track or test track then you can do a lap and 'create' the track through the data?

**CH:** "Yes and it depends on the length of the track but normally I create four-five splits. If it is a GP track then you can create the segments in accordance with the timekeepers."

**DBR:** Is it easy to do? People might look at it

and think 'complicated'..."

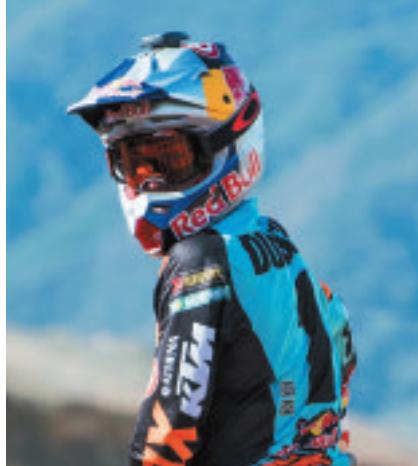
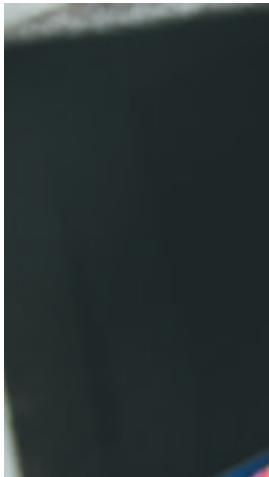
**CH:** "Yes, as with anything it is trial-and-error at the beginning. I use it myself when I ride and in between sessions I will sync and have a look and I know 'ah, ok!' You can overlay laps and thanks to the green and red trails see where you are going quick and can maybe go quicker. What you'd do afterwards is look where you can gain tenths or a second and where you are making good lines and time. Obviously this is what guys in MotoGP have been doing..."

**DBR:** I guess the biggest paradox is applying something so precise to a sport that is 'loose' and not necessarily in the same bracket as something like road racing. But it does seem to simplify and qualify what a rider is doing right and wrong...

**CH:** "That's right and on a well known track [he shows us Pala in California and Searle's laps from the other day] it gets clearer because you can have things like jumps lengths and distances and analyse air-time. One of the founders of LITPro wrote an article dissecting the airtime of all the guys using the programme on one specific jump and broke it down to try and explain why one guys wins from that group. He broke it down to reveal that is was the guy leaning further forward and not necessarily scrubbing. It was more about forward momentum. There was a lot to it."

**DBR:** Have you found that riders are generally receptive to assets like this?

**CH:** "Generally I think they are. Guys that are more analytical pick it up a lot quicker. I think



guys that want to get better then accept it. Obviously some don't care so much but it is such an easy thing to embrace with a view towards improvement."

**DBR:** This is now your fourth year as a trainer?  
**CH:** "Yes."

**DBR:** So if you took on an athlete like say, Cooper Webb, would you want to go with that in your hand?

**CH:** "Yes because I honestly feel that it can benefit every rider to see what he or she can do. I think it is an advantage and if the top guys were doing it then I think you'd see the rest take it on. When I work with a guy I'll say to them 'is there anywhere that you feel are struggling to get a line?'. We all have that 'thing' in motocross where we are thinking 'is that line the fastest? Is that the fastest way?' You might think it is...but do you have any proof? Now you do."

"You can select one area of a track and overlay the lines done on the different laps and identify what was more effective...and even look at heart rate. This is just one part of the App. We also have a Gatedrop section that analyses the time and distance from the start gate so that can be measured. I mainly look at lap-times, corners and lines and in supercross we look at air-time and rhythm sections. Each rider has different characteristics."

**DBR:** I assume the accuracy is good...

**CH:** "Really good. The things we are working on more are to do with interface and making it

easier for the general public or the hobby rider to operate it and see the value – to be able to see what they can get out of it to be better. For me I'll gather data from every session a rider will do but it more to look back into over time and dip into things like body analytics so you can see the amount of times you have been in heart rate zones."

**DBR:** What are the drawbacks at the moment?  
**CH:** "The hardest thing right now is that we need Wi-Fi or internet coverage to operate it so if you are at a track that doesn't have coverage then you won't be able to make the sync between sessions. Sometimes in the stadium we struggle with the GPS data because we need eight satellites and if it's a covered arena then we cannot get it – but most stadiums are open and motocross tracks are obviously."

**DBR:** When did this kind of technology start coming into play?

**CH:** "I actually saw the company start coming into the sport in 2013. They had a couple of guys testing it and they brought me onboard in 2014. We did a few demos and the process from where we started to now has been huge. They have been developing all the time."

**DBR:** The advantages seem obvious for the tight confines of supercross...

**CH:** "I think in that discipline it is already beneficial for a rider to see what he has done. You'll get a print out of your lap-times but you still won't necessarily know why you did one particular lap-time. You are just guessing. You

will say 'I did that lap well...' but what was it exactly that you did differently?"

**DBR:** If you think about it then this is long overdue in motocross isn't it?

**CH:** "Yeah. This is the only product that has come close to giving riders more information. There are others but this is the most versatile and advanced in a lot of ways. The App goes very deep in other aspects."

**DBR:** Maybe it will need riders to change attitudes. Some experienced ones will still rely on feel and instinct as they have always done. A rider like Vsevolod Brylyakov might embrace this more than someone with much more experience like Tommy or Shaun Simpson..."

**CH:** "Even Tommy though...at a session I will say to him 'try some different lines, then we can analyse it'. Riders shouldn't be afraid to try different things. Tommy was actually quite forthcoming and believed it would offer an advantage at the races...in timed qualifying especially."

**DBR:** Not meaning to sound dramatic but it could be like an overhaul in the sport. Some riders will be convinced about what they do and their personal line choice. But if they come in and you can show them that another course is quicker..."

**CH:** "It will open minds I think. The riders that see the potential of what they can do thanks to programmes like this will get better. I know for a fact that last year LITPro helped Dungey win a race. There was a certain supercross in

2015 where another top level rider was doing something different on the track and they analysed the data and it was between 0.2-0.5 a second quicker. If you do that every lap it adds up over 20 laps."

**DBR:** At a race there is not a lot of time. With this system it is like you become a technical part of the team...

**CH:** "You do, and if you are a trainer then this is what's needed. You can help them physically and with nutrition and to warm-up etc but that's really easy. This is the stuff that has to make the difference. Even when we were out training the other day Seva's mechanic came to me and said 'can you check the data because I'm not sure if I had the right lap-time'. So I uploaded and had a check and he was right."

**DBR:** But as a former rider yourself how will it feel to be the guy that the rider now almost has to speak with first after a session or a race?

**CH:** "It is tough because some guys will be like 'I have my own way' but if you can prove it to them then they are like 'okay, I get it'. We have also made tests for road racing. I was working with a rider and we decided to try it on a lap of Fontana. A lot of it is just about gathering information."

**DBR:** What heart rate was he hitting in road racing?

**CH:** "Around 163-166, pretty low, but in road racing there is slightly less demand – it is more concentration and precision. I was more worried about the device falling off because it was attached to his helmet! Line choice was less critical there and it was about small adjustments."

**DBR:** It is obviously a tool. Is it something you just download from the App store?

**CH:** "You can buy it. The first batch came out in October 2015 and the new one is in February.

From a training standpoint I feel that the trainer has to be there to do this stuff because if you are at a race then a rider will have a lot going on with commitments and being pulled left, right and centre. I feel that this is our job. We download, look and analyse and say to him or her let's go through the session."

**DBR:** Can you envisage there being a Pro and Lite version for the professional racer and the weekend rider?

**CH:** "That is one of the things we have talked about in the company. We'll have a couple of different avenues with a 'trainer' version and then a 'public' version. It is all in development and it works well. It is all iOS based and can be synced with iPhone or iPad but to create a track you need an iPad. Just personally I love looking at it and I'm always trying to beat myself."

Fast forward to May 2016 and Hay has been working around Steve Dixon's team at MXGP and in the British Championships. In keeping with the common cliché around the world of technology – things have moved fast. Dungey has already appeared in a website video with a GoPro lap tethered to his LITPro data and the Red Bull KTM rider has won a second consecutive supercross title.

Website racerxonline.com asked the champion what he thought of the training aid and importantly how it might pop up into television pictures soon. "LITPro has been a big advantage for us just here in these open stadiums," he is quoted as saying in a recent story. "But it sounds like they're working for the future with Feld and to try and hopefully do some good things. Not just lap times, sections and overall times and everything like that but maybe heart rates and all kinds of information that they can live stream straight to television. I don't know. Don't take my word on that.

"The thing with our sport, we have our helmets on all the time and so nobody sees that

suffering and the high heart rates. It will give them an idea of the physical endurance that it takes to do what we do. I think it's good for all of us.

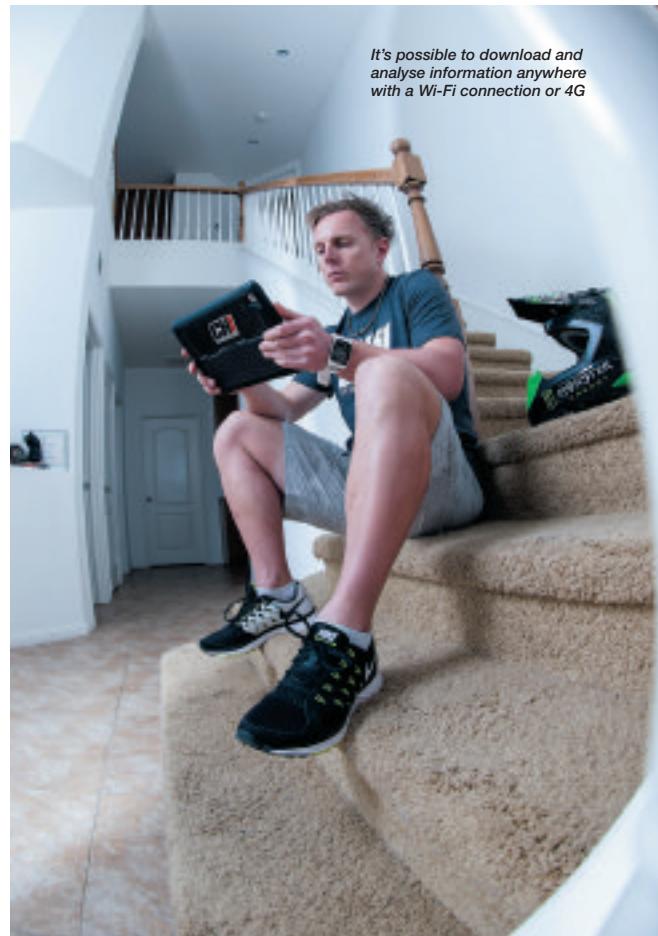
"Seeing heart rates would be cool but I think even better would be the speeds," he added. "I think people would be really surprised how fast we are going into the whoops, through the whoops."

We had demurred with Hay that some of the older generation of riders might be reluctant to place trust in data over instinct but 28 year old double British Champion and 12 year veteran of Grand Prix Shaun Simpson told us he was 'dying to give it a go' where as Searle was a little more blasé. "I liked it...but then I also haven't used it that much and you need a good connection for it to work properly," he opined. "I have found it useful but there is just so much information. I think its main advantage comes with a 'live' service because it is much better to see what you are doing right away instead of having to wait. I do think you need someone there doing it for you and interpreting it.

"I reckon it is best used when you are in a group and you can see and compare what others are doing," he adds. "For supercross and rhythm sections it is ideal and guys like Dungey and all those in their compounds can keep seeing and checking."

LITPro is seeping further into the establishment but MXGP is still unexplored. Live transmission of data is forbidden in FIM rules – mainly in an effort to control costs – but teams are already using telemetry recorded during sessions and then tweaking set-up afterwards. It is helping with bike modifications but offers limited assistance to the rider.

Searle and Brylyakov can be spotted in photos from the 2016 Thai Grand Prix with the LITPro device on their helmets and Hay has been helping the team. In an interview conducted two years ago with Youthstream – in Thailand oddly enough – the Grand Prix



promoters admitted that live GPS signals could have promising repercussions for the TV package but the investment then in equipment and antennae was still adrift of the standard needed for broadcast. It seems that this summer MXGP has been beaten to the punch by the Americans. More than four months have passed since we originally spoke to Chris on his work with LITPro – a firm that was originally started with a staff roster of just two people – and the wheels have apparently been turning rapidly.

**DBR:** Has LITPro moved forward since we last spoke?

**CH:** "There has been quite a lot going on. We have been trying to update the App and we've developed a 'live' system which is a lot better than before. It is mainly a training tool and will provide live updates to the trainer or the rider himself when he's on the bike. It is the next level really. It's been in development for a while now and we can see what is happening a lot faster. I've been riding with it and you actually get messages into your ear about your lap-times and your segments...which is pretty amazing. I've used it myself quite a few times now and it is phenomenal because we are getting much more information than before."

**DBR:** That must have consequences...

**CH:** "For 'Live' you need a phone connection, preferably 4G, and that's the drawback at the moment. But we're just at the beginning and we'll get more experience through the nationals this summer and an NBC deal."

**DBR:** So LITPro is actually being used for broadcasting now?

**CH:** "You know how you have seen the GPS on MotoGP TV coverage? We can now essentially do that for motocross."

**DBR:** That's quite a big deal then...

**CH:** "It will be good and you'll see it on the

TV pictures at the Nationals. I actually need to head back ASAP before Hangtown to be the liaison between NBC and the athletes."

**DBR:** In MotoGP you see almost every bike with an onboard camera or GPS info. How will it work in the USA?

**CH:** "There will be data coming from a select amount of riders, depending on who NBC chooses. I not 100 per cent sure at the moment but I think it will be five riders in each class and it will be linked to the television broadcast."

**DBR:** So that's five riders wearing the unit – no issues with homologation there then?

**CH:** "In America it is fine...it is a bit trickier in GPs at the moment but we are working on it."

**DBR:** I think there is actually an FIM rule forbidding the transmission of live data during a race...

**CH:** "At the moment there is and the issue we are running into at the moment with MXGP is the GoPro agreement they have. We have to make sure we have indemnity and it will take some time to sort out but it is in the process."

**DBR:** You could theoretically see someone like Tony Cairoli wearing two devices on his lid – looking like a Christmas tree...

**CH:** "You are probably going to see that happen over time. Things will move. We'll see. There is a lot going on. I have already spoken to Youthstream about it and it has only been a couple of weeks and they are keen.

"They wanted to try it on the GoPro lap from the German Grand Prix but because of a few technical issues we couldn't overlay the information and we still need to find an agreement there. I think you will see it on American TV first because we are well down the development line for that. It will be 'next level' for the viewers. LITPro were covering the

Nationals last season with data acquisition and there were not many issues. I'm sure the first few rounds will be an adventure but we are building something for the future. Hopefully it will all be sorted and dialled-in by Hangtown already."

**DBR:** Have LITPro got any 'ambassadors' yet? As GoPro do...

**CH:** "At the moment it is just a small company. The riders are seeing the value in it because they want to use it. They want to wear it, rather than being made to wear it. I wouldn't say we have ambassadors but we have partnerships. All of Aldon Bakers guys – Dungey, Anderson and Musquin – have taken it onboard and Aldon is extremely into the product. Dungey has been wearing it at every possible opportunity. Chad Reed even uses it as well so we have pretty much nailed the top five in the class!"

**DBR:** What about in GPs?

**CH:** "Yes, we used it in Sync mode – so not Live – in Thailand with Seva and Tommy. It is a 'grey area' at the moment and we want to make sure we are using it the right way."

**DBR:** What about the British Championship?

**CH:** "Yes, we are using it there and have not had any problems. I ran it with Tommy at Canada Heights and it was more for looking at data afterwards. I don't know if you saw Tommy's crash? [now a notorious slow-mo video clip of a first turn pile-up] but there were some pretty high G-forces going on there. It came through as 18G through his head – pretty big! We could look at the laps afterwards and see what was going on. The more data I have the more I can help the riders. I don't tell them too much or make it too complicated because they have enough going on as it is but if there are just a couple of pointers I can see through the programme then it helps."

*Although small in size the usefulness of the LITPro system is limitless*





John Meara is top dog in the MX1 division

# FAMILY TIES!

**THE MEEARA BROTHERS ARE CURRENTLY KICKING ASS ON THE EMERALD ISLE AND AS THINGS STAND ARE LEADING EVERY MAJOR MRA MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP THERE IS...**

Words and photos by Ian Cairns

**T**wo rounds in and both premier classes of the MRA Ulster MX Championship are currently led by one of the Meara brothers with John out front in MX1 while younger sibling Jason is in charge of MX2.

Born n' bred in Loughbrickland – a small town that's situated about 25 miles south west of Belfast city centre – the hard charging pair are also currently out front in the Irish series too meaning that between them they're currently in charge of every major motocross championship worth winning on the Emerald Isle.

Despite now being out front neither rider topped the podium at the opening round of the series that took place at Desertmartin. In the MX2 class Cumbrian wildcard Brad Todd took control on the day acing all three motos on his Braithwaites Garage/Planet Racing Suspension Husqvarna as the younger Meara put in a 3-3-2 scorecard to take second overall ahead of Richard 'Dickie' Bird. Big brother John had a much tougher time at Desertmartin running 7-7-4 in MX2 and 5-5-3 in the MX1 division

which put him third on the podium with winner Robert Hamilton and runner-up Gary Gibson.

It was a different story at round two in Seaford. The hardpack hillside track really seemed to suit the Mearas with Jason taking MX2 honours with an awesome 5-1-1 scorecard while John took third overall courtesy of solid 1-3-3 results.

And that form continued in the bigger class too as John traded up to a KX450F for the MX1 class battles. After being beaten across the line by both Robert Hamilton and Wayne Garrett in race one, Meara knocked it up a notch for the rest of the meeting and remained unbeaten.

In the MX1 series standings Meara now leads by two points over Wayne Garrett while Hamilton, Bird and Craig Browne round out the top five. In MX2 Jason Meara takes a handy four point lead over Bird into round three at Tandragee with big brother John currently third. Behind the #60 in points come James Mackrel and Sean Devlin.

To find out more about the Meara brothers tune in next month for an exclusive interview with the speedy pair...



Andrew McKibbin gets on the gas at Seaford

Jason Meara leads the MX2 title chase after round two



Brad Todd took maximum points in MX2 at Desertmartin



Super stylish former youth ace Matthew Loughlin has failed to crack the top five so far in 2016



Sean Devlin takes a Seaford soil sample



Dickie Bird is a genuine title contender in both classes

## SERIES STANDINGS

### Norman Watt MCs MX1

1	John Meara	122
2	Wayne Garrett	120
3	Robert Hamilton	119
4	Richard Bird	90
5	Craig Browne	85
6	Jordan Scott	78

### Nutt Travel MX2

1	Jason Meara	128
2	Richard Bird	124
3	John Meara	113
4	James Mackrel	100
5	Sean Devlin	82
6	Jordan Keogh	76

BURNICLE'S BEAT

# ROOKIE TERROUR!





## THE MEN WHO MOVED UP A CLASS AND WON – KINDA LIKE TIM GAJSER REALLY...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**W**hen Slovenian teenager Tim Gajser won the opening MXGP of 2016 it was only the third time that a reigning world champion had stepped up as a premier class rookie and won straightaway. New bike, new series and a whole bunch of new and unfamiliar rivals create a big challenge to any newcomer but Gajser shocked the established stars beneath those Qatari floodlights. I know of only two guys who have ever previously accomplished such a feat!

In 1984 the late Georges Jobe was hired by Alec Wright as lone spearhead for Kawasaki's 500GP assault. The youngest ever world champion in 1980 on a 250 Suzuki, Jobe then twice lost the title chase in the final race of the season until, in 1983, comprehensively beating his opposition again, avenging 1982 nemesis Danny LaPorte (Yamaha) to reclaim the 250cc title for Suzuki. Victorious at the opening three GPs in Spain, France (despite a busted clutch lever in grim conditions) and the Netherlands, Jobe was never really threatened en route to a world title he tied up three rounds early at Unadilla, in the USA.

The change to Team Green came about after Kawasaki boss Alec Wright visited the British 250GP at Hawkstone Park with his 500cc riders Jonathan Wright and Kurt Nicoll. Georges performed miracles that day, somehow salvaging second place overall in

a tie-breaker with LaPorte despite seeing out the second moto with a punctured rear tyre. Alec, perched atop his Team Green truck, led the applause as Jobe rode his stricken Suzuki back to the pits. With Nicoll moving to KTM and Wright retiring Alec signed Georges for an assault on the 1984 500GPs. 1982 250cc world champ Danny LaPorte also made the move, joining the factory Yamaha squad on the somewhat outdated air-cooled YZ490.

The blue riband 500s presented a major challenge to both men. LaPorte joined reigning world champ Hakan Carlqvist to take on the might of a Honda Racing Corporation quartet comprising Andre Malherbe, Dave Thorpe, Andre Vromans and another class rookie, double 125 world champion Eric Geboers.

The first round was also new to 500cc racing. The traditional Austrian opener had moved from the huge rocky hillsides of Sittendorf to the more compact, steep, spectacular but spectator friendly valley of Schwanenstadt. Georges, however, had won the Austrian 250GP here in 1981 so he was returning to familiar territory.

Though narrow in places the circuit swept up and down an imposing grassy hillside, most fans gathered beneath tall pine trees on the opposite side of this perilous ravine. Jobe's fellow 500GP rookie Geboers actually won race one ahead of his team-mate Dave Thorpe with Georges third ahead of Carlqvist, Dave

>>

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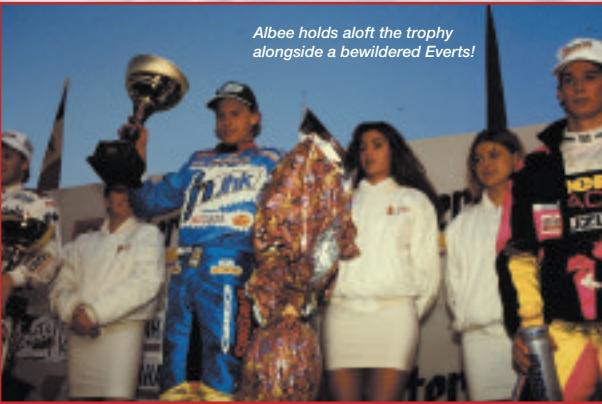
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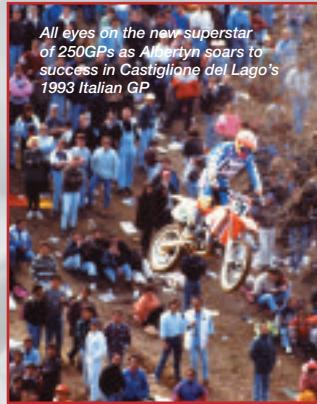
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Albee holds aloft the trophy alongside a bewildered Everts!



All eyes on the new superstar of 250GPs as Albertyn soars to success in Castiglione del Lago's 1993 Italian GP



Greg Albertyn (Honda) wins the 1993 Italian 250GP at Castiglione del Lago

Watson (Kawasaki), Vromans and LaPorte. But Georges took command of race two and blitzed to victory in his pristine white Sinisalo gear, beating 'Carla', Thorpe and Geboers to rack up an historic maiden 500 grand prix win.

In fact Georges went one better, winning round two at Payerne, in Switzerland, on a tie-breaker with ex-champ Malherbe's Honda to maintain his lead in the world championship. Eventually, despite his first double race win in Canada, Georges fell just 11 points short of fellow Belgian Malherbe after a mighty battle with the Hondas. Andre clinched his third world title while Thorpe finished the season with a mercurial sequence of six successive race wins to finish third, 10 points behind Jobe. Georges spent a further two seasons with Team Green before winning the 500cc crown in 1987 – on a private Honda!

Five years later 250GPs had taken over as the manufacturers' favoured class. Suzuki, Kawasaki and Yamaha all fielded factory-backed teams. Stefan Everts, Suzuki's golden boy, stepped up as reigning 125 world champion and won the first 250GP of 1992 in Valkenswaard. But 12 months on Everts was on the receiving end when his successor as 125 world champ chimed in aboard a private Honda. An affable blue-eyed South African with long blonde hair, Greg Albertyn had won that 125 title alongside his mentor, legendary Dutch engine tuner Jan de Groot, on the latter's blisteringly fast CR125.

A five-time national champion back home, the ambitious young Greg travelled to Paris to contest the Bercy supercross in late '89 and landed a deal to race a Belgian-backed Kawasaki in the 1990 125GPs. The season

was wrecked by a broken wrist before Jan spotted him racing the Maastricht SX that autumn... "some crazy rider from South Africa riding supercross very fast. Sometimes a little bit too fast!"

Jan had unearthed a new sponsor called JHK, a Dutch construction company, and had always harboured a desire to breed a world champion. He called 'Albee' and they quickly agreed a deal. Jan, a Honda man back then, bought HRC's 125cc kit then ditched it. "Just because its factory, it isn't always better!" he smiled. Despite missing the first two rounds with a broken leg, Albertyn improved dramatically to 10th in the world, registering his first rostrums at Genk, behind Stefan Everts, and the final round of the year in Japan.

Encouraged, De Groot hired former world champ Davey Strijbos to assault the 125GPs alongside Albee in 1992. Greg won the opening round in Spain and crucially struck seven times in the last 12 motos of the season to seize the 125 world crown with team-mate Strijbos a distant second. This was the first time a private team had claimed the 125cc world championship – with his best mate from back home, Ian Harrison, on the spanners!

And despite receiving no help at all from Honda, they eyed up the 250s. At least their bigger bike engine kit was usable, though Jan had to buy it along with Showa factory suspension and a SPES pipe ("better than the HRC pipe and cheaper tool"). Outwardly, the motor looked standard but de Groot's tuning genius had transformed its internals to provide the hard-hitting power Greg liked. And having been bred on the hard-pack supercross-style tracks of South Africa Albertyn loved the look of

the opening 250GP venue of 1993.

Castiglione del Lago lies in Perugia, central Italy. Its 13th century fortress juts out into Lake Trasimeno on a proud promontory. The Moto Club Trasimeno was founded in 1908 and staged their first epic event round the lake on a 35 mile circuit the following year, though it would be another 69 years before they constructed their 'crossdromo' at nearby Gioiella in 1978.

Some 10 years on they acquired their first grand prix, a 125 mudder won by Jean-Michel Bayle. Conditions could not have been much different for their second Italian GP. A long, sunny Saturday afternoon of practice and qualifying sessions brought the stars of the 250cc firmament together for the first time. Albee, relaxed as ever, had only been back from wintering in South Africa for three weeks.

"I'm taking it slow and easy, like I did last year," smiled the 20 year-old from Johannesburg. His main rivals constituted Bieffe Suzuki stablemates Stefan Everts and Bob Moore, reigning champ Donny Schmit and former champ Alex Puzar on Michele Rinaldi's Chesterfield Yamahas and 1991 king Trampas Parker (KTM). British-based contenders included Castrol Honda team-mates Rob Herring and 250GP newcomer Kurt Nicoll, Action Workshop Kawasaki duo Marnicq Bervoorts and Billy Liles and Mitsui Yamaha's Paul Malin. Sunday morning timed training saw Everts edge out Parker by a 10th of a second ahead of Bervoorts, Albertyn and Nicoll.

The short uphill sprint to turn one looked safe enough but funnelled into a sharp right-hand turn. Nicoll made a flying start but was suddenly smacked from the inside by Malin and triggered >>

Against a perfect Perugian backdrop, Bob Moore (Suzuki 2) thinks he's holeshot the third moto but Albertyn (Honda 67) is nipping through on the inside



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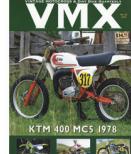
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Georges Jobe (Kawasaki) beats reigning 500 world champ Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) at opening round of 1984



a disastrous melee that claimed, among others, Bervoerts, Frenchman Fred Bolley and, right at the bottom of the pile, the man most of the huge crowd had come to see, poor Alessandro Puzar. Helmet cracked, head bleeding behind his ear and Yamaha trampled flat Sandro's season never recovered until he won the final round in Japan...

Up front Schmit, Herring and Everts made good their escape. Michele Rinaldi had predicted British champion Herring as the danger man and sure enough Robbie caught Schmit and shoulder-charged his way past the aggrieved American. Everts took advantage too but within a lap Herring made one of those infuriating mistakes that peppered his grand prix career, caught his footpeg in a rut and fell over! He remounted to salvage third ahead of new boy Albertyn and 'Chad' Parker. Nicoll had pitted to replace a shattered front wheel before re-emerging for a few exploratory laps. So the hectic first of three motos favoured 250cc big-hitters Everts and Schmit – no surprise there.

Race two and Albertyn simply rocketed out of the blocks ahead of Parker and Nicoll. All three turned in their fastest laps early on but none quicker than Albee's third circuit at two minutes 26 seconds – a second beneath Everts' pole

lap that morning! If this was the 125 champion's notion of 'slow and easy' then the opposition had reason to worry. Stefan never moved from fourth but Schmit nicked fifth from team-mate Moore while Herring stormed from last to ninth after a first turn tumble.

Race three and the JHK Honda once more made itself scarce in front of Donny Schmit. The two world champions were never troubled. Everts and Herring, both suffering from early season blisters, fought an uncomfortable battle for third place but Nicoll landed on Michele Fanton across a downhill double jump and Moore's ignition quit. 'Fantomas' survived to finish fifth ahead of Parker. But Greg Albertyn had imperiously announced his arrival on the 250GP scene.

On the rostrum alongside a deeply satisfied De Groot, he received frosty congratulations from runners-up Schmit and Everts. He and Stefan never really got on. Back home in Belgium, where Greg was based, Stefan gave his version of events to the newspapers. Albee, a man who simply got on with everybody in the paddock, was surprisingly hostile!

"Everts told the Belgian press that as soon as we got to more technical tracks like Payerne

he was going to beat me," he said a few weeks later, blue eyes blazing! "Every Friday he says 'I'm going to win', then every Monday 'oh, it wasn't my day, Albertyn got lucky'. But I'm living in his country. I can't say anything. Maybe after Lommel, when I win there..."

Albertyn didn't have to wait that long. First he edged Everts out of the overall by a single point in the Dutch sand of Valkenswaard then beat the Belgian in every race at Payerne. He did triumph in two of Lommel's motos then DNFed the third (which Stefan won, though the overall went to a consistent Bervoerts). But further grand prix victories in Germany, Great Britain and Venezuela plus strong podiums peppered with race wins in Northern Ireland, Unadilla and Finland saw the amiable but aggressive South African scorch to his first 250cc world crown 101 points clear of Everts.

At the time of writing, having followed up his Qatari MXGP triumph with three successive victories in South America and Latvia and second place behind Tony Cairoli at round seven in Germany, Tim Gajser leads the MXGP world championship. Could the Slovenian yet emulate South African Albertyn's outstanding feat?

500GGP rookie Georges Jobe stabs his factory Kawasaki to second race victory in the 1984 Austrian GP



Georges Jobe (Kawasaki) crests the formidable first climb at Schwanenstadt on his way to winning 1984 Austrian 500GP



Stylish 250 champ Georges Jobe wins opening 500GP of 1984 in Austria



# PROGRESS REPORT!

DAN FIGURES OUT HOW TO GET THE RM-Z TO HANDLE HOW HE LIKES IT AND MAX GETS PIMPED TO THE, ERM, MAX...

Words by Dan Grove and Max Hind  
Photos by Matt Dean and Scorch Images



**I**t's safe to say that since my last update I've been clocking up the hours on the little RM-Z and I even took in my first race meeting on it. Better than that though is the fact that I've finally landed on a decent fork set-up for me that I'd recommend to any AMCA Expert level rider that's around six feet tall, 11 stone in weight and just happens to own a 2016 Suzuki RM-Z 250. Fortunately I found this setting before the race after continuously changing settings between practice sessions prior which was okay but it does get a bit tedious when you don't make an awful lot of progress.

As this is my first season aboard a four-stroke – and one with air forks – I was aware that I'd take a little time to settle into it though. With the sag set at 105mm and stock settings front and rear, I initially softened up both ends with the standard fork pressure set at 34 psi. I highly recommend checking the air pressure before each ride as it has crept up on occasion.

I won't fill this page up with every setting I went through however if your speed and measurements match mine run the forks at 31 psi (the softest setting that you can run according to the manual) with the compression at 10 clicks out (seven out is standard). With the rebound featuring high and low speed damping – which is another

first for me – I didn't find that it made an awful lot of difference when the fork pressure was at the standard setting so I left the rebound settings as standard.

As the fork pressure made such an improvement I didn't want to spend more time making adjustments when the bike handled and felt exactly how I liked it whereas last month I tried using only the clickers to find a good setting. It's good to get to know your bike I guess which is one positive which came out of all the changes.

As for the shock, I've played around with the clickers but I can't seem to find a setting that I'm happy with. The bike seems to handle fine but I'm getting a bit of back pain after riding so I've gone back to the standard settings for now although I do plan to go softer.

Another change I've made this past month is changing the fuel map. I signed off last time advising that I was going to try the 'lean' white plug but in the end I opted for the 'rich' grey map. Don't get confused with the names of these maps thinking that lean means that it will run lean and seize up like a two-stroke. These maps change the power delivery so the lean is more bottom-end whereas the rich is more mid and top-end.

It takes 30 seconds or less to change these and the power characteristics change instantly. I can tell you that >>

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the grey map made such an improvement that I've not wanted to try the white one! The power delivery now means that you can really hang on to each gear which is great for exiting corners with deep ruts or sharp acceleration bumps as you can power out the corner without having to upshift too soon out of the corner.

The bike now just keeps pulling with plenty of over-rev which I really like as it's more like my 250cc two-stroke that I could stick in third gear and ride nearly everywhere. The optional maps come in the spares kit and by next month's update I'll have tried the white plug just to get a comparison.

As I'd found a comfortable fork setting, had my preferred Renthal bar bend on the bike and I was happy with the power characteristics, I took out an AMCA day licence at Bromsberrow to get my first race in on the bike and it was the ideal proving ground as it's proper deep sand and the bottom with long hills – and it got rough!

I turned the rear Metzeler MC4 so that I had a good edge on it and the shock actually worked really well on the rough stuff which kinda confirms that I need to soften it off for the smoother tracks that I'll be riding this year – this track was the roughest track I'd ridden in a long time. I couldn't fault a thing about the bike the whole day and didn't adjust anything on it.

On the long uphills the bike just pulled me up them with no sign of slowing off which was awesome and I reckon it's mainly down to the grey fuel map as on hilly tracks I'd ridden with the stock map previously, the power was slightly dropping off although that was in muddy conditions.

After all this riding it was time for a new chain and sprockets as the standard equipment was getting a bit hooked. The good folks at Bike Alert hooked me up with a mega package of consumables comprising of a JT Racing chain and sprockets, a couple of Hiflofiltro air filters, enough Hiflofiltro oil filters to see out the season and a pair of JT Racing brake discs.

Now, the brake discs were intended for a set of aftermarket wheels which unfortunately didn't fit the bike so the discs have found their way on to the standard wheels along with a set of Renthal RC-1 brake pads and the aforementioned JT sprocket. I bled up



the brakes and greased up the pins that the callipers slide on as well just to make a sure the whole job was done right so I'll report back next month on the brakes to see if there is an improvement over the stock discs and pads.

Hopefully by now you'll be able to obtain a 13 tooth front sprocket that the locking washer fits into. At the time of writing these seemed to be in short supply so I had to modify the locking washer to fit a 2015 RM-Z 250 sprocket. For the 2016 model machine Suzuki changed the stock sprocket to have larger holes and bigger tangs which meant I had to file down the tangs to be narrower so they'd fit inside the smaller 2015 sprocket holes. I also took a bit off the end of them – hopefully you can see these minor changes from the images but it's not a big job when you know how to do it!

The chain supplied is actually an x-ring chain which is marketed as having less drag than a normal o-ring chain and playing around with it – as you do when you take a chain out the box – it doesn't stay up like o-ring chains do and it drops down nearly as quick as a normal chain so I'm interested to see how this performs. I'm yet to ride the bike with the new running gear and I'll let you all know how I'm getting on with it all next month...





## DBR TESTED

### HGS EXHAUST SYSTEM

We've got a lot of time for Roland Shaw from Hardcore Racing here at DBR – he's a top technician and really knows his stuff. So when he says 'you've really got to try this pipe on your bike' I know it's going to be something special and something really worth doing.

A lot of top riders use HGS pipe systems on their bikes – they are particularly prevalent on the Husky and KTM 250Fs – so we figured there's got to be a very good reason. Roland from Hardcore explained that the system he has for the 2016 FC/SX-F 250 is a special piece of kit that he has developed himself in conjunction with HGS.

The front and mid-section of the system is the normal HGS kit which on its own gives good gains over the stock pipe but the piece de la resistance (and only available from Hardcore racing) is a special silencer that Roland designed himself using his many years of experience. He claims that it gives more bottom to mid-range over the stock pipe (and HGS's own silencer – which already gives gains over the stock pipe) as well as providing a better throttle response but doesn't lose any top-end or over-rev at all. Those are some bold claims so I was pretty excited to get on track and see what all the hype was about.

Even before hitting the track I was finding advantages to the HGS system. Anyone who has changed the pipe on the '16 KTM or Husky will surely know that the stock pipe is an absolute nightmare to get off – you either have to remove the rear sub frame (not a nice thought with all the electronics that are located in that area) or if you know the right trick you can drop the rear shock out and take it off that way.

Neither of these are quick so if you happen to flatten your stock pipe on race day you could be in trouble if you need to change it pronto before your next race. Whereas with the HGS you'll be pleased to know that it's only a matter of undoing the exhaust mounting bolts to get it off, which is how easy it should be really!

Last but not least Roland chucked in a carbon exhaust guard to finish off the job and protect my new Answer gear and TCX boots that you'll see in the photos – cheers Roland!

I've only had a chance for one quick blast on the bike before this month's deadline came calling but all I can say is wow. I love the FC250's smooth power delivery and the HGS hasn't changed that one bit – it's just as smooth – but I think the best way I can describe the difference the HGS has made is that it now feels as though the bikes on steroids. Everything just feels a little better. I think I'm going to enjoy this...

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**Contact: 01487 813755**

**DBR TESTED****ANSWER SYNCRON KIT**

A couple of months back the kind chaps at Leatt/Apico hooked us up with a fresh new lid. Although the helmet featured some revolutionary new safety specs its safe to say that the red-black colour way clashed a little with my gear sets at the time... and as a rider my one and only job these days isn't actually to go fast it's purely to try and look half decent for magazine pictures. It's a tough life I know but this colour clash just wasn't on so once again the kind dudes at Apico sorted me out with some fresh threads to match my new lid.

The black/red Answer Syncron gear matches the Leatt helmet perfectly. It's a relatively simple design – which in my opinion is always better – that I think really stands out from the crowd. I'll let you take a look at the snaps and decide that

**DBR TESTED**  
**DRAGON NFXS  
GOOGLES**

To really finish off the 'pro' look Apico also hooked us up with a bitchin' set of Dragon NFXS goggles. These things are damn right striking and the patented frameless technology gives the Dragons a unique look that would be more at home on a ski slope rather than a motocross track.

The frameless design has its benefits however with the biggest being it offers a huge field of vision. I had been using a roll off system just days before I tested out these Dragons and I have to say that swapping the slim strip of vision that you get with roll offs for this massive Dragon lens made me feel hyper alert and really on the ball.

The Hypoallergenic micro-fleece lining kept all sweat from interfering with my vision,

for yourself though...

This isn't by any means Answer's top of the range stuff yet at the same time it doesn't feel cheap whatsoever. After a couple of rides so far the jeans are holding up well against wear and tear. Both the pants and jersey are comfy and breathable with plenty of space around the knees to easily fit over bulky knee braces and to be honest I've been thoroughly impressed so far.

To really tie it all together for the full-on factory look Spiral GFX provided us with some shirt printing. We've got my name, number and logos all on there looking trick. That's another step closer to looking cool in the photos I guess...

**Price:** Jersey £25  
**Pants** £85  
**Gloves** £22  
**Supplier:** [apico.co.uk](http://apico.co.uk)  
**Contact:** 01282 473190

meaning that I could stay focused on my riding. I have to say that I've yet to come across any problems with these new specs – they are cool, comfy and damn right sexy. I definitely feel as though I'm winning the goggle game at the moment...

**Price:** £60  
**Supplier:** [apico.co.uk](http://apico.co.uk)  
**Contact:** 01282 473190





**B**esthorpe Motocross track is a fun and friendly practice facility nestled in a quiet corner of East Anglia. This humble little track actually has a rather long and storied history. Besthorpe has been an operational motocross track for 42 years now – formally used as a race destination throughout the 1980s and '90s the track is now exclusively used for practice days.

The family that own and operate Besthorpe are the same family that previously owned and operated Hockham motocross track so it's safe to say that they know what they're doing and this is ever so apparent when you turn up for a day's riding at Besthorpe. The track is prepared beautifully and the atmosphere is very chilled and friendly. Opening Saturdays and Sundays 10 through 4 and Wednesdays from 10 until 8 o'clock at night (during the summer months) Besthorpe is a must visit destination if you're looking for a fun and relaxed day at the track.

Besthorpe is a relatively scenic little place considering it's only a rather small and flat field. With the limited space available to them the Besthorpe track crew have been really smart with their track layout making the most out of a small piece of land. Currently the track is approximately three quarters of a mile long, with the fastest lap time being set at 1 minute 16 seconds. However plans are currently in place to extend the track by making use of some paddock space to increase lap times by 25 seconds or so.

Despite this relatively short lap time there's plenty of things to enjoy about Besthorpe. Naturally the soil is hardpack which means they have been able to build and mould an assortment of jumps and obstacles of varying difficulty. There are fun little step-up/downs, small double jumps, mid-sized table tops and one massive 110ft table

which is incredibly fun and needs to be hit flat out and stretched on a 125! Despite the size of some of the jumps all are safe and easy for all abilities. Nothing is overly difficult or overly scary – every jump can be rolled safely if you're not inclined to launch yourself 110 feet or more feet through the air.

The limited space means that the track is fairly tight and twisty and not all that wide with a total of 14 corners and only a few long straights where you can really open her up. There are flat 90 degree turns, 180 bowl berms and fast sweeping bends – the combo of the tight and twisty nature and the jump centric design of the track comes together to create a fairly arenacross/supercross feel to the circuit.

As mentioned the natural base of the circuit is hardpacked clay however a few corners have been wood chipped and berm up very nicely. The Besthorpe track crew have been very smart here by not overdoing it with the woodchip (which is often the case) but simply implementing the softer stuff in a few of the flat corners to help with traction, making those sections a whole lot more fun. In my opinion Besthorpe is a very two-stroke friendly circuit – it's just so much fun aboard a little 125cc machine.

As well as the fun, flowing nature of the track itself, Besthorpe has a lot of other things going for it. The general vibe at the track is really cool – the focus is on fun and having a good time on the track. It's rare nowadays to come across a circuit with a track fee of only £25 but Besthorpe is one of the few. Typically a day at Besthorpe is split into three sessions - Kids, Novice and Expert. Sometimes on particularly busy days the novice group is split in two. However when DBR visited the track it was rather quiet and therefore we had

just one rolling session which simply added to the chilled out vibe of the day.

The only negative that comes to mind when thinking about Besthorpe is simply the length/width of the track. I can imagine that on a really busy day it can get a little congested out there. However, with the planned extension Mark and the guys are looking to combat this problem head on.

In terms of difficulty and suitability Besthorpe can cater for anyone. The layout is rather simple and easy, the soil is hardpack and stays pretty flat and the jumps are safe yet challenging. Besthorpe's main customer base is made up of novice and intermediate riders yet many of the local British championship level racers are known to regularly pop down to Besthorpe for mid-week training motos.

Facility-wise Besthorpe has pretty much everything you could ask for. Spares shop? Check. Burger van? Check. Kids track? Check. Marshals and medical team? Check. Everything you need for a great day out on your dirt bike? Check.

They say it themselves; Besthorpe is a little different compared to other practice facilities. It's a fun, friendly place and I for one can't wait to go back!

## CONCLUSION

A diamond in the rough

**Difficulty** – simple layout but some big ass jumps

**Fun factor** – up there with the best of them

**Facilities** – the bases are covered

**Overall DBR score** – an old school, no BS, practice paradise



# ESSENTIAL INFO!

## BESTHORPE MOTOCROSS TRACK

**Location:** Besthorpe, Norwich NR17 2LQ

**Length:** 0.75 miles

**Prices:** Adults £25, kids £20

**Contact:** 07884 465335

**Surface:** Hardpack

**Shop:** Yes

**Catering:** Yes

**Kids Track:** Yes

**Coaching:** No

**Toilets/wash block:** Yes (flushable toilet block)

**Opening times:** Sat/Sun 10am – 4pm  
Wed 10am – 8pm

**Difficulty:** Low to medium

**Enjoyment Factor:** High

**Suitability:** Everyone

**Session length:** 20 minutes

**Groups:** Four Three (Kids, Novice, Expert)





# Project

AFTER ANOTHER OVERALL WIN AT THE THIRD ROUND OF THE BSMA CHAMPIONSHIP, DBR PROJECT PILOT JOE CADWALLADER WAS BACK IN THE THICK OF THINGS AT HAWKSTONE PARK...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

**K**icking the month off with a win in the Senior Open class at round three of the Bridgestone BSMA Championship, DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader's next race was at Hawkstone Park for the third stop on the Maxxis MXY2 tour.

After a tough opening race we caught up with the 17-year-old in the pits where sports nutrition expert Stephen Smith from Liverpool John Moores University was taking a blood sample to measure his post-moto markers.

"I went to the BSMA round at FatCat and won the overall there and apart from that this month's been all about training," says Joe. "We go on the watt bike and do 50 minutes of interval training where you go maximum intensity, then rest, then go again."

"I'm also doing a lot of running and gym work. I definitely feel a lot fitter. We have a 5km running loop and when I first started I was eight minutes slower than I am now. Training's going really well. I've lost three-and-a-half kilos and 20mm of fat."

Stephen, who's undertaking the UK's first PhD in motocross, goes into more detail.

"We take skin folds to measure body fat," he explains. "Obviously the higher the skin fold score the higher the body fat percentage. When we first started working with Joe his was in the 80s and now it's down to the mid-60s which is quite a big difference considering we've only been working with him for two or three months."

"His body weight has come down and is starting to level off but his skin folds are still dropping so he's losing body fat and putting on muscle."

"Joe seems to have really taken to the programme we've got – he does what we tell him to do and this is showing in the results. He's getting fitter and he's due a retest in the gym so we'll get some official results soon."



The programme isn't just a learning curve for Joe and Stephen's research is proving to be an eye-opener for him.

"Even though I've been riding bikes for 25 years I've never been involved in motocross so the more I do the more I'm learning and the more I'm realising that it's a fascinating sport from a physiology point of view. These guys are fit."

Joe's RMJ Academy FC 250 Husqvarna UK machine has also been given plenty of TLC this month courtesy of tuning expert Matt Hutchins at Evo-Tech who's worked his magic on it.

"We have been using a standard bike so far this season but now I've got my race bike which has helped me," adds Joe. "This is my first time out on it and it feels good – the power's so strong it's hard to get used to it but it'll definitely help me."

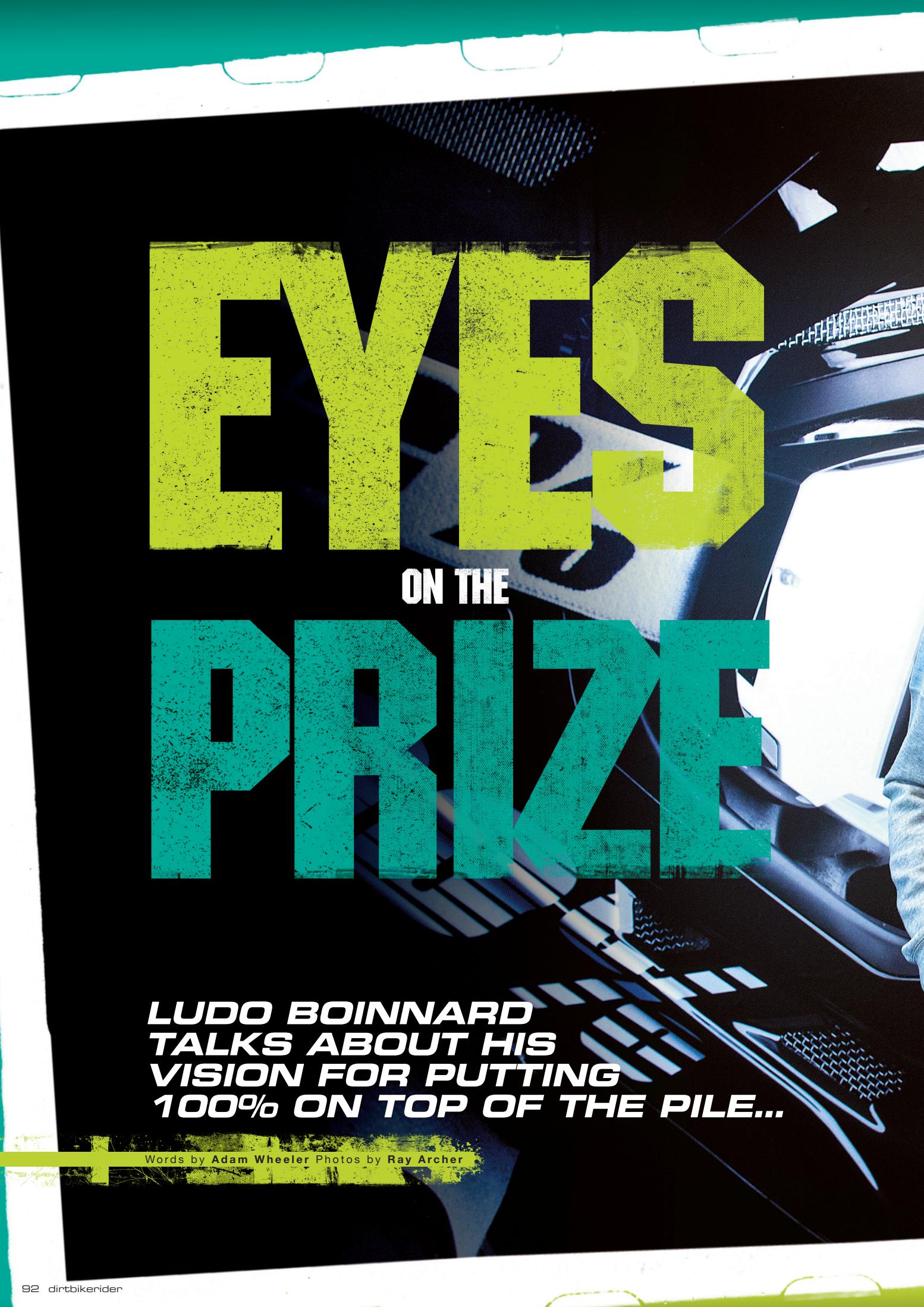
Joe's opening moto was a tough test but he came back strongly in race two and scored his best result of the season with a 12th-placed finish.

"I got a bad start in the opener and was about 20th. I was coming through strongly but crashed on the third or fourth lap and lost my goggles. Every time I got close to a rider I couldn't just go in for the pass because I had no goggles – if they roosted me it would be game over – so I had to take my time."

With Hawkstone in the bag Joe's next event is north of the border at Duns for round three of the Michelin MX Nationals.

"I was in Spain with Bryan MacKenzie at the start of the year and he told me all about it so I'm looking forward to racing there."

DBR will be following Joe and the RMJ Academy Husqvarna every month so stay tuned for further updates...



# AYER ON THE PRIZE

**LUDO BOINNARD  
TALKS ABOUT HIS  
VISION FOR PUTTING  
100% ON TOP OF THE PILE...**

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer





*The men behind the rebirth of the 100% brand – Marc Blanchard and Ludo Boinnard*

**W**hen we visited 100% in their modest office in downtown San Diego back in February 2012 there was an incessant background noise of four-legged friends barking from a neighbouring kennel facility. The area was somewhat rough and 100% were just getting-going. Skip along four years, through rapid expansion and staff recruitment – they are now seven times bigger than those humble beginnings – and the Ludo Boinnard and Marc Blanchard owned google firm are the top dogs in their segment (we'll stop the canine references here).

A receptionist flashes us a Californian smile and asks if we want coffee. The new reception atrium of 100%'s modern HQ (open plan, outdoor chill/BBQ area at the back, glass walls and walkways, white paint and stripped back décor) is a curious place to spend five minutes as we wait for 50 year old Boinnard – a man with such a footprint in the motorcycle industry through his work and influence with the likes of Braking, Tag Metals, One Industries and now the revival of 100% that when he talks, you listen.

We've spoken to Boinnard's good friend and long-term business partner Marc Blanchard before on his design output and vision, and as the creative force behind the duo's work. Marc is as friendly and seemingly laidback as ever when we meet him again later but he is also a little stressed – Supercross is in town and that means a raft of 100% athletes are descending on the office for a photoshoot set up in the warehouse towards the rear of the property. Ludo eventually bounds towards us and we're gestured into his office that holds more than a few images and references to Steve McQueen, photos of his kids, mementos from his rallying days, a book of expensive watches on his desk and a pair of glasses that the recently re-married, slim and exhilarant Frenchman seems a little self conscious about.

I'm not sure if Ludo has had an indifferent experience with media before but he appears a little cagey about the interview process and

would appear to be sub-editing himself as we chat along, constantly thinking about his portrayal and also the 100% brand. He is an acute, reflective and engaging talker – you get the feeling that a careless question will be thrown back at you with a derisory nod while he tends to venture off on tangents that don't quite tackle the enquiry at hand. As a multi millionaire and repeatedly successful businessman it's clear you are talking with someone that has a wide and shrewdly analytical view on the world. He also seems quite spiritual. Overall, quite a character, and a challenge to interview.

It swiftly becomes clear that Boinnard and Blanchard's secret will remain exactly that today but our goal remains: to try and tap into how 100% has made such an impact and so quickly. Boinnard himself claims 'surprise' at the 'rise'. Over the course of our visit during the morning a few basic deductions help explain their prominence. 100% was born and prospers thanks to a good goggle, good design, good presentation and most importantly – a good price.

**DBR:** Last time we spoke, 100% was just getting started...

**LB:** "Was that when we launched in January 2012?"

**DBR:** About that time. We were here for the Supercross...

**LB:** "So yeah, we'd just started!"

**DBR:** So give me assessment of how things have gone from that time and how satisfied you are...

**LB:** "Satisfied? It is a word I don't really like because I like to look at a previous year and see an improvement in our lives. Are we happy? Yes. Satisfied? I don't think we ever will be. Content? Definitely not. When you use a word like 'content' then it means 'enough' and everything is okay and we don't need to do any more. So I'd say we are 'happy' and the goal was to re-launch 100% to what the brand deserves to be and at the same time be something exciting for everybody involved.

"I think we are succeeding in that and this is what matters. The fact that it is successful, businesswise, and is a recognised brand – and one of the most exciting right now in motocross according to all the distributors and the reps everywhere – is great. Have we made mistakes? Yeah. Have you noticed them? No! That's the secret. To make sure those errors are small enough that they are not seen and haven't damaged the company or the brand."

**DBR:** Come on, a small example? Be honest...

**LB:** "We made so many! We were hard on ourselves but it's normal – if you don't make mistakes then maybe you are not trying enough."

**DBR:** What about a quantitative value of how things have grown? I mean we're here in a new office in San Diego, more people, more products, more space, more resources, more awareness...Has it gone '100%'?

**LB:** "Oh yeah. At the end of the fourth year – if we are talking gross sales, numbers and dollars we're as big as what One Industries did after 10 years."

**DBR:** Really? Was that a surprise? Especially given the slow growth of the economy...

**LB:** "It is not what we expected but it what we dreamt. The dream was to do in five years what we had done before in ten but we did it in four. The dream was there but the expectation was not as drastic and we did not put as much pressure on ourselves. When we sold One Industries in 2007 the whole point was to take care of our families and be able to relax and remove that pressure from our shoulders. Then a lot happened and we really wanted to come back and do something else."

"I don't like to use the word 'bigger' because it is not about size but be something that was closer to our hearts. I cannot really explain it yet but it is related to the brand and the brand deserves so much. Drew Lien [original 100% brand creator] had a vision back in the eighties and probably didn't realise how big it could go. The sky is the limit for this brand and it means

**DBR:** Maybe presence then? You and Marc must have mined the contact list to ensure 100% was out there quickly and in the right places...

**LB:** "Of course Marc and I have experience and we had Bevo [Forti] join us and he has 40 years of experience. Scott Watanabe had 30 years at the head of Scott in the US – that's a lot when you put it together and all the contacts. Marc and I were riding motorcycles since we were teenagers and he had this early passion for design and Grand Prix, went to design school and was working on a magazine before moving to JT. Some of the people we had at One Industries – the best ones actually – joined us here and brought all this experience along. All the knowledge, the relationships worldwide, the business relationships all amount to something. I don't know how to quantify it. It is probably more quality than quantity actually."

**DBR:** Were there a couple of key moves in the re-launch story of 100%? A teenager in the depths of Scotland might be reading this and then opening a pair of 100% goggles thinking 'how on earth did I get these in my hands'?

**LB:** "People ask me 'hey, what do you think of this? I'm starting my own brand...' and recently there was a kid in Belgium and then another in Italy [wanting advice]. I think the only way you can succeed is by not cornering your brand or company to being a Belgian or Italian company. You have to be international."

"Today with social media...well, the iPhone only came out in 2007! It is very recent in business times and it has changed the world. Today you cannot be just a local company. If you want to be a coffee shop then yes, you are local. If you want to be a brand and have products and the skills to succeed then you cannot rely on just your local market. You have to be instantly looking at the whole world and it's what we did."

"We fed contacts worldwide from the One Industries days and before that with Braking

and before that I was an Export Manager for American brands and finding distributors for them when the American companies had no idea about international business. For 25 years I built this network, so when you launch a new product – like we did with the goggles – are you just going to do it in the US and wait for someone to call from England or Australia? Or do you already have a clue what you are going to do in those countries?"

"You need to have a clue before you launch because those orders that you get before you 'go' is money already in the bank that helps you right-away and allows you to sponsor someone or have some synergy with the next quarter or the next six-month purchase and production and development of the product line. You cannot just come up with a brand and a design and put all your effort into prototyping, sampling and then just produce 200 goggles and wait. If you do that then you are dead."

**DBR:** So is there one moment or one factor that really helped things kick off? Just thinking off the top of my head but maybe the alliance with Parts Unlimited was a big thing?

**LB:** "In the US, Parts Unlimited was our first distributor and they believed in us. It was a situation of us having a new goggle and being a new business and an interest from them in having a new brand and we were the ones. We benefitted from it but would we have succeeded without them? Yes, we would have. And they would still be in very good business today without us. However the fact that we joined together was mutually beneficial. If you enter a business relationship with anybody and it isn't beneficial for both companies then 'don't'. If there is no mutual respect then it will go nowhere."

**DBR:** Is 100% growing into another behemoth like One Industries? Where is it going?

**LB:** "It is already bigger than what One Industries ever was but we never know what the future is made of. We don't know if the

economy will tank, if we have a war or the oil prices tumble. You are at risk every day of changes beyond your control. If anybody thinks they are in control of their lives in this world then they are living with an illusion. I could tell you that 'we are going to be this-or-that' but we have a dream and we are tugging along making sure that we give this dream all the resources it needs. If it gets there then great! If it doesn't then we'll look at the 'why'."

**DBR:** It is also happening at a different time in your life...

**LB:** "A totally different time. I'm 50. And when I was younger I used to look at 50 year olds and think 'man, that guy is so old!' In my head and my everyday actions I'm definitely not 50!"

**DBR:** I remember you were trying to learn about the Ski business with another brand. The motorcycle industry was obviously a passion and a first expertise and now you have taken 100% into mountain biking so how was that?

**LB:** "It is funny you mention that because the Ski project was a failure for many reasons and the main one was that my life was changing so much personally in 2012. We just had 100% and I knew my one year old [ski] business was just going to die. I went through it and I embraced the destruction. From the ashes I built something new because it was a time in my life when I was separating and divorcing and there were a lot of problems. I could also say that it was the worst ski year in 50 years – which was true – but would it have been different if we'd had some snow? Probably not. I was not being myself...but I learned a lot both on a business and a personal level and by meeting people in the mountain industry through the skis."

"Mountain" or Outdoor is totally different. In the performance aspect of a mountain bike there is a big crossover with a motorcycle. I won't tell you that 50 per cent of mountain bikers ride a dirt bike because it is not true but 50 per cent of motocrossers use

>>





Ludo and his Dakar finishers medal



a lot to a lot of people. So our job and our mission is to make sure we don't screw it up."

**DBR:** In our last interview you mentioned coming back to work because you had to set an example to the kids about making your way in the world. Ultimately has 100% swallowed a lot more of your time than you envisaged?

**LB:** "Actually no, it is really strange. I remember when I started Braking with the Italians I was putting in 80 hours a week and that was before I had kids. When I moved to San Diego and started the venture with Marc do to One Industries – and still had Braking for a while until I sold it back to the Italians – I was still doing 55 to 60 hours.

"Slowly over time we got up to 55 people and could scale that back. I was giving myself breaks with my family and also doing rallies that would be two weeks out. It was important. Today I am spending less hours but I have more experience and more knowledge – not mine especially and specifically but through the team we have. Like I said we had 55 people at One Industries when we sold the business and we have 28 here now."

"In terms of sales [numbers] we are just as big and we have a different business model in the way we work, distribute and market but the quality of people and the team is outstanding for knowledge and passion and the level of collaboration – everybody from marketing, design, branding, tradeshow, to R&D and even in operations and finance. Everyone in this building is passionate about this brand

and the message we are trying to send. I think people [customers] love the brand, the look and the products we are making but there is more coming. To have that small but well-oiled operation is the biggest change."

**DBR:** In 2012 there were only a few of you (five maybe?) so recruitment has had to be quick and important...

**LB:** "Because of the brand, the way we look and the quick success of the company it means we have attracted a lot of people. So really it has been more about screening. There has been a lot of demand and praise from well-established companies to work for us. The attraction to the brand has been a blessing. People just want to join."

**DBR:** Why are people so attracted to 100%?

**LB:** "Well, Marc is a genius. Marc can make a five-people company look like one that has 10,000! He has great talent and we saw it with One Industries and now with this."

**DBR:** Is the creative side something you discuss or does Marc say: "hey, I've done this..."

**LB:** "We have meetings. Marc comes up with a lot of stuff and we get together and talk but the ultimate look, the precision and the cleanliness of his branding and his communication is really 'him' and his touch."

**DBR:** I know there are a few stories about your life and achievements and we have touched on two previously in interviews with One Industries and the re-launch of 100% and the reasons for

that...but what I want to know now is the tale of 'how?' How has 100% gone from that re-launch with a couple of guys with a great track record to where it is now? I remember also a few years ago you said you'd seen where other goggle companies where going wrong and you were going to exploit those mistakes..."

**LB:** "Oh definitely. My first job was in a motorcycle shop and I've worked in all levels of the industry. I've been a purchaser, a rep, a sales guy, a racer; and doing those 12 hour day events over fourteen days like the Dakar means you get a good understanding of a product as well. It is like Bruce Lee says in his video – "Be water"!"

"You cannot convince people to buy something that doesn't work. You cannot convince people to be behind a brand that you cannot be behind yourself. You have to leave room for imagination and personal interaction with the brand – Marc is really good at that. He is not coming up with a slogan to say – 'here we are, who we are and here it is'. He is not going to corner the brand."

"The beauty of 100% is that it's so wide and people can make their own story or personal interpretation of it. What is important with a brand is that you don't corner it. You don't put it there and then expect people to come to that corner. The brand is big: bigger than all of us, so don't marginalise it. Let it be free and let people come and join it."

**DBR:** But how exactly do you do that? Is it a 'look' thing...?

**LB:** "It is not just a look thing."



mountain bikes for training or lifestyle. 20 per cent also use road bikes. So there is a crossover and the downhill mountain bike world looks up to motocross like crazy while the motocross guys look up to the downhill guys. There is a mutual respect. Troy Lee has been successful in both segments for a few years and Troy is doing what he does very well.

"When the crisis hit in 2008 and everything crashed down dirt-bike sales were halved and everybody was struggling. A lot of businesses were geared up for big volumes so they had to implement big cuts and changes in their organisation to react to the situation. The aftermarket business also suffered but not as much because in motocross the core riders are still there.

"What we lost were the people on the outskirts, the mainstream, those that saw X-Games and wanted to get into biking. People stopped buying new bikes and were rebuilding the old ones for a few years so some people still sold a shitload of chains, oil, suspension prep and so on.

"Hovering in there somewhere was mountain bike that was already growing and has been for the last 10 years. It ticked ecological boxes as well. Motocross and off-road was noisy and smoky and the mainstream turned away from it and that's sad because it is actually a great way to get close to nature, pollutes less than cars and it so quick to get around – it is a great lifestyle."

**DBR:** Lastly, you started out with goggles but the product catalogue has grown enormously

– gloves, protection, apparel – although Marc said on the record that you guys would never do a helmet!

**LB:** "Yeah, it's a downhill helmet...but we love helmets! We did revolutionise quite a few things in terms of looks through One Industries in 2004 with the Trooper. When one of the biggest companies in motocross has your helmet on a table during a meeting and you've come from being a graphic company to doing helmets successfully then it is like: 'Yes!'. So exciting. Anyway we did a mountain bike helmet and we have a few surprises up our sleeve but in motocross we have the goggle and the gloves. It is a core market and people really know what the brand means."

**DBR:** I know how much effort went into the goggles and development but if you are going to multiply that by six for six different product areas then that means quite an increase...

**LB:** "It is not only that. If we did a motocross helmet then nobody would wear our goggle any more. We would only sell goggles to some of our helmet customers. I don't think you would wear a helmet brand on your strap. That's what Scott did. They diversified and somebody decided to start making boots, gear, helmets and their goggles tanked to the point that they stopped doing other products in the US and just focussed again on goggles. They were number one and now I think they are number three or something like that. You have to know what you are."

**DBR:** So you are still pushing ahead and exploring avenues? You are not content just to

be the top goggle seller?

**LB:** "Yes, of course, although I don't want to tell you what we are doing next! But goggles and eyewear are our top priority and our business. In One Industries we started with graphics in a tiny workspace and there were 27 other companies when we came out in January 1997 and within two years there were only five in the US and we were number one.

"In 2004 we launched our first helmet and meanwhile we'd grown the casualwear. When we sold the business in 2007 a third of the business was graphics and plastics together, a third was helmets and a third was casualwear – it was big and it was fun but I really care about focussing on every product in our business and the brand deserves this. Some companies do as many part numbers and products as they can and just look at the numbers. We rarely look at the numbers but instead the performance aspect of each product in each category and make sure we put the same effort into others."

Boinnard is conscious of the camera flash popping in the corridor as Blanchard reluctantly poses for some portraits. It's now his turn before thoughts have to turn to the imminent arrival of athletes like Dean Wilson, Marvin Musquin, Malcolm Stewart and the ever growing rider roster. Euro 'banter', phone tones and the bong of email alerts break the general quiet and is a gentle reminder that 100% are full-ahead in prep for their home event in AMA Supercross. Like the massive racing series itself, 100% seem on a hard charge to popularity and prestige. Where will they be in another four years?

# SXS MANIACS!



# MANIACS!

THE DBR TEST SQUAD  
CHECKS OUT THE INSANE  
WORLD OF SXS RACING -  
A SPORT THAT'S BASICALLY  
MX IN FOUR-WHEELERS...

Words and photos by Max Hind/TooFast Films





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**"I nearly killed myself racing quads back in 2006. I was in intensive care for 12 days and obviously my family wasn't happy and didn't want me to go racing again after that. Several years later I came across the SXS British championship. You're strapped in, you've got that cage around you and you can't fall out. I'm 57 years old now and at my time in life I need to be strapped in and I need to be safe. SXS was the safest motorsport that I could find," explains Andy Dare, a competitor in the 2016 SXS British Championship Series.**

There are many in the world of dirt bikes – more likely than not some are reading this magazine right now – that find themselves in

a similar situation to the one that Andy found himself back in 2006. No matter how faithfully and religiously we worship them, the Gods of the Dirt can be cruel creatures and they can often take away the thing that we love most, snatching away our dreams of glory and triumph on the track. Sometimes it's simply through the slow decay of time and weary bones, other times it's through far more serious consequences and injuries. Either way there are many that have been relegated to the sidelines to simply watch as others shred the dirt and have the time of their lives while doing so.

However, a pair of tired old knees may not

necessarily mean the end of the road for your dirt shredding days. Heck even paralysis hasn't prevented some from getting back out on track – and winning.

The British SXS racing championship is a relatively new series that is just starting to catch fire, allowing racers – both young and old – from all walks of life, with backgrounds in an array of motorsports from dirt bikes to rally cars to get on track, rub some paint, hit some jumps and bust some berms – all while in the relative safety of a nice sturdy roll cage. SXS racing has been called motocross on four wheels so when team DBR were invited to go and check it out we simply could not refuse!

Glorious sunshine welcomed us to the >>



*Max goes it alone in the first moto after nervous passenger Dan almost lost his lunch in the morning practice session*



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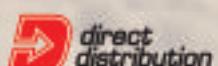
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# SXS MANIACS!



fourth round the 2016 British SXS racing championship in Bawtry near Doncaster. Myself and my DBR test team cohort Dan Grove were about to gain the full SXS experience and in typical DBR fashion we were thrown right in at the deep end.

But before all of that I guess I should firstly give a brief explanation of the sport. SXS (or side by side) racing is what it says on the tin really – a race series designed around the two seater (that's where 'side by side' comes from) off road buggies that you may have seen and/or leered over in the past.

These things are serious beasts that are designed to hit jumps and race hard. The majority of the SXS paddock races Polaris RZR machines as they are the most competitive vehicles out there. The series runs three separate classes, the 900cc class, the 1000cc class and the 1000cc turbo class.

The series promoters run two separate championships/ event types throughout the year – the short circuit championship is a series run on motocross tracks consisting of 3 x 15 minute motos and enduro events which are a two hour long race across much tougher terrain, around much longer tracks. So if you are looking for balls to the wall action or a far more tactical affair, SXS racing has both on offer.

Back to the Team DBR experience. Dan and I were offered the opportunity to make use of the arrive and drive facilities that the SXS promoters >>



IT IS NOT ALWAYS  
THE BAD GUYS THAT  
CHOOSE A LIFE  
BEHIND BARS.

Max eases the 900cc Polaris over a tabletop



offer at every event to potential petrol heads and adrenaline junkies that want to try out the sport before taking the plunge and purchasing a buggy of their own. We gleefully accepted the challenge of competing in a day of short circuit competition having never driven, let alone raced one of these machines beforehand.

We were shown around our race machine for the day – a hot pink 900cc machine to match our Driving Miss Daisy level of speed on track. Despite the pink paint job we were determined to look cool, the controls were simple enough – go pedal, stop pedal, steering wheel. That's all we needed to know. We would be sharing the drive time, I would take the first stint in practice and Dan would be my monkey in the passenger seat. Half way through qualifying we'd stop to swap so Dan could have his practice. I'd then take the first race, Dan the second and whoever did best would take to the line in the driver's seat for the third and final moto.

Being hardcore, experienced dirt bike hooligans we thought we'd take to SXS racing like ducks to water. However the transition from two to four wheels wasn't quite as easy as we'd imagined – it took some time to learn how the buggy would react to different situations and even longer for us to turn off our moto-centric brains. However we were hitting the jumps in no time and we steadily decreased our lap times throughout the day.

Although it did become clear after the >>



## DAN'S POV!

MAX'S SXS SIDEKICK SPEAKS OUT...

"The experience was good. Max and I shared the 20 minute qualifying session equally in which Max went first. This actually made me feel a little unwell but after that I went out for 10 minutes by myself which I quite enjoyed.

"We shared the races – Max went first and I went second. I soon realised during my race that it was previous a shoulder injury that was making me feel sick and it wasn't Max's driving after all! Even though, I enjoyed the driving, the atmosphere has been awesome and I can't fault the track – they kept on top of watering and stuff all day.

"Watching from the sidelines there were a lot of impressive drivers especially when I watched Max go out with one of the top boys in the 1000cc class – he was very fast!

"Obviously the event takes place on a motocross track, although the jumps have been reshaped with four wheels in mind. Between my practice session and race there were at least five races and the track had chopped up lots – probably even worse than what a motocross track does! There were lots of berms around the corners which I was trying to make use of and it seemed like there were a lot of motocross style line choices and techniques being used – like coming in wide and squaring things off to avoid the ruts. It was good!"



Between them Dan and Max now have over 40 minutes of SXS racing experience between them



qualifying session that my driving – I mean, I didn't think it was too bad – made Dan feel quite nauseous which is weird because I honestly thought it was going rather well! Because of that we opted to go solo for our races (which is an option as you don't actually have to have two people inside your SXS vehicle).

Obviously we were well off the pace compared to the full-time British championship drivers and when race time came around we were both bringing up the rear of pack. Despite this however it was quite obvious as to why more and more people are becoming engrossed in the SXS racing championship.

For ex-motocross riders in particular I can see how this championship can be so

appealing. If you look through some of the results you may well recognise a few of the names from the moto scene. Mark McCann, owner of Fro Systems and Paul Rowlands, formerly head honcho of the PAR Honda team both race at the front of the field in the 1000 and 1000cc turbo classes.

When the buggies race off the start you get that same thrill, the roost, the rubbing, the intensity. The mind set of the racers is akin to that of a dirt bike rider – take no prisoners and win at all costs although the atmosphere in the paddock is friendly, relaxed and full of comradeship. You get much of the same thrill as racing bikes with the added security of the roll cage and seatbelts. The worry of a twisted knee or a broken collarbone has disappeared

– I have to say that it's quite a relief!

I gathered all of this insight whilst simply plodding around at the back of the pack. My eyes were truly opened as to just how freaking awesome this race series is when I rode shotgun aboard a beastly 1000cc machine with one of the championships top drivers.

Tom Fletcher kindly offered to take me out as his passenger during his second and third motos in the 1000cc class which is the most competitive and deepest field. Tom showed me how it should be done and also turned my pants a new shade of brown. The only way I can do justice to the two motos I did with Tom is by comparing the ride to the world's gnarliest rollercoaster. It was freaking insane and I can truly see why more and more people



are getting hooked.

I thoroughly enjoyed my own drive time in the pink 900 and felt as though I was getting better as the day went on despite the track really churning up with ruts and bumps. Throwing one of these machines around the track was somewhat of a workout but not nearly as much as a 15-minute motocross race. I'm aching a little as I write this the Monday after the race but not any where close to what I would be if I'd put in three races on my bike.

In regards to the event itself, the day was nice and relaxed, very chilled and there was no rushing around which was cool. There were only nine races in total throughout the day which meant that the organisers had plenty of time for track prep between races which was awesome

and kept the dust to a minimum on a scorching hot day. The camaraderie in the pits was also great to see. A team of mechanics are on hand to help everyone and anyone who needs it. The entire paddock just wants everyone to get out racing and having a good time which is a really nice and refreshing vibe to experience on race day.

The one and only drawback I can see with SXS racing is the cost. As you may have guessed it's a little more expensive in comparison to scrambling but if you do have the sufficient funds and you do feel as though you can't race motocross bike any longer I really couldn't recommend SXS racing enough.

In my time I've tried many different sports and many different disciplines. So far none have

really been able to come close to beating the thrill of riding a motocross bike. However after my SXS experience I can safely say there's a new number two in town. Dirt bikes are still tops but SXS does come a close second.

But if dirt bikes are truly a no go for you any longer then I think Andy Dare says it best – 'To any ex-racers out there that still have the want and the need to go out racing and get that adrenaline kick but don't think that they can anymore I would encourage you to come and give SXS racing a try. I did and it's the best thing I have ever done. I love it. I live for the weekends again now – I've got my life back...'

Visit [www.sxsracing.co.uk](http://www.sxsracing.co.uk) for more info on how to get involved.



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**NICKNAMED IRN BRY AND WITH A STEELY DISPOSITION, WHEN IT COMES TO RACING MOTOCROSS BRYAN MACKENZIE IS A 24-CARAT COMPETITOR WHO CAN TAKE THE BIG HITS AND KEEP COMING FORWARD...**

Words: Sean Lawless Pictures: Nuno Laranjeira

**B**ryan MacKenzie exemplifies pretty much every quality needed to succeed in a sport as tough as motocross. His guts, determination and a never-say-die attitude have ensured that – at the ripe old age of 31 – he's still capable of taking British championship race wins and schooling riders many years his junior.

But it's not just on the track where his resolve and refusal to quit comes into play and, at times, the battle simply to get to the races has been every bit as fierce as the fight when the gate drops.

Watching Bryan race to the opening Maxxis MX2 moto win at Hawkstone Park in May, it's easy to forget that at the first round at Lyng just two months before his championship campaign had got off to a shocking start following a pre-season injury.

"Initially going into Lyng we were a wee bit behind," he says. "Not the team as such, just me personally. I got a 350 in the winter to start practising on and I crashed just before the New Year and broke my collarbone. I

ended up having to get an operation on it but because it was in the holiday period I couldn't get the operation straight away so I ended up sat on the couch for over a week with my collarbone completely in half.

"I finally got it plated on the seventh of January so I missed pretty much five weeks before I could even get back on the bike. When I got on the bike we didn't waste any time – we went straight to Spain – but the downside of that was you can only really go with what you've got and we didn't have anything to test so we went with a standard bike and just a few bits and pieces. All we were doing was chasing the weather and getting some bike time in."

After the Pendrich Kawasaki team pretty much went belly-up midway through the 2015 season – more on that later – Bryan did a deal with Apico Husqvarna for this year but his injury meant he was starting 2016 on the back foot.

"There were a lot of things that were different as well which I struggled with. I'd changed everything which people kinda don't appreciate. Kit, helmet, goggles, >>



boots, bike, tyres, suspension – absolutely everything was different, the only thing that stayed the same was me and my mechanic. There was a lot to overcome and we never really had a chance because I was laid on the couch for January. So that was a ball ache and it left me a little bit behind when I went to Lyng.

"When I came back I didn't have much time to do anything in terms of different motors or whatever and we ended up riding a bike which Steven [Clarke] has developed. There's no doubt, the bike was really good but it just wasn't really suited to me. So I never really got much testing on it before the first round and I kinda struggled a wee bit.

A 'wee bit' is a massive understatement. The truth is Bryan had his worst result for almost four years, running 11-17 for 15th overall.

"Don't get me wrong, Steven proved that our bike was mega at Lyng but it just wasn't really suited to me. Everyone will know that I'm a revver and Steven's not. He likes it real torquey and I just like to rev the sh\*t out of it. That's just my style. I like to use engine braking to slow down in the turns, I like my back end to be low.

"My bike, the way it's set up, sits low in the back end and also, because I like to rev it, it means I'm on the power more and when you're on the gas it pulls your back end down again. That's how I like to ride, with the back end squatted down which means it needs to be under power more often than not.

"I struggled a lot because when I got this bike it was basically Steven's bike. Again, Steven proved it was brilliant but for me it was like I was trying to ride someone else's bike which felt a little bit too weird for me.

"I'm not putting my results at Lyng just down to that – I got caught up in a bit too much carnage but I never made any heroic charges through the pack and I think I'm capable of doing that.

"Y'know, if I fall off on the first lap I feel I should still be

capable of getting back into the top 10 which I almost did in the first race but in the second race I totally never. I was 17th or something and I was really disappointed with that."

After the disappointment of Lyng, Bryan set to work dialling in the Husqvarna to his own personal spec. With the help of his close-knit team led by mechanic Bryan Connolly – or BC as he's better known – within a month he'd turned everything around and took second behind his team-mate Clarke at Canada Heights.

"The big change between the first round and the second round was because we had four or five weeks in between so I was able to adjust stuff in the engine. Not loads but we managed to change cams and do a little bit here and there just to get it more suited to me which made all the difference. Now I'm super-pumped on it. I'm really happy.

"Last time I rode a European bike – a KTM in 2012 – the biggest problem I had was the handling. It just wouldn't sit low enough at the back for me and we chased it all year trying to get it to feel right but this time around with the Husky it feels brilliant in terms of how it sits and suspension and handling. Everything's great, I've had absolutely no bother."

At round three of the Maxxis at Hawkstone in May his progress was clear to see as he took an early lead in the opening moto and pulled away to win by over five seconds, his first moto victory in the series for over two years. A crash in race two cost him any chance of a second career overall Maxxis win – he won at Desertmartin in 2013 – but fourth on the day saw him move to third in the championship.

"I'm not surprised at how well I'm riding at the moment but that's not forced me to re-evaluate my goals. I've come in with the same goal, realistically, for the last five or six years and that's to try and win or be on the podium and this year is the same as ever. I don't train through the winter to just come and make up the numbers. >>



*The Maxxis series started off slow at Lyng for the Scotman but by round two he was flying...*

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*A pre-season injury meant Bry started the season on the back foot although he was soon up to speed*

"I'm never a stand-out winner – I don't run away with any championships – but I think I'm always considered as a threat and every year there's always an elite five or six riders in the championship and I always make it into that."

Bryan's been a fixture in the top five since 2011 – his best season was 2012 when he was third overall – and in 2009 he raced the second half of the MX1 world championship for CAS Honda as a fill-in rider for his cousin Billy, scoring a top-10 moto finish in Sweden. The experience he's gained has made him a formidable opponent, despite specialising in a class that's traditionally packed with throttle-happy young guns looking to make a name for themselves.

"It's getting harder out there – absolutely, 100 per cent. I don't like to admit it but I do sometimes question some things like stupid jumps and stuff. Some of the younger guys will do them but I'm like 'there's just no need for that mate' whereas I know a few years ago I'd do them as well. I still get out-of-shape in motos and do still scare myself – I come into

turns a handful of times each race like 'sh\*t, sh\*t, sh\*t' and then you just go for it and you make it.

"I don't think I'm consciously slowing down but I do think the young guys are rolling the dice and taking chances a bit more than I am. I'd like to think my experience makes up for this and I don't put myself in as many positions to get injured anymore."

"I've obviously been injured but I've not really missed any races in the last six or seven years. Granted I broke my collarbone but I managed to do that at a time when there were no races."

Bryan's always been known as a hard-trainer and all the years of hard work in the off-season have had another benefit.

"I don't have to train as hard to be as fit as I am now. It's almost as if I've got over 15 years of knocking my hole in to where my base fitness is just really high."

"For the first seven or eight years of my professional career I trained too much. I was under the illusion that if you have a bad result you must train harder and you end up totally >>

## Life after motocross

### BRYAN'S PLAN ...

When he's not putting in fast laps you can normally find Bryan grafting at the Duns track in the Scottish Borders where he's held the lease for the last 18 months.

'Canny' Scotsman is a massive cliché but running the track – arguably the best in Scotland – is Bryan's way of looking to the future.

"I'm not so naive to think that motocross is going to go on forever. When I was 25 I said I wanted to do something before I finish racing that'll tick over without putting too much effort in but will build up so when I do finish motocross I have somewhere to go."

"I didn't intend for it to go this way but it just so happened that Duns came up. It's nice now knowing that whatever happens even if I wouldn't make a great living I could survive."

A former British championship and Red Bull Pro Nationals track, Duns had slipped off the radar until Bryan took over the reins and turned its fortunes around.

When we spoke he was WFO getting ready for the third round of the MX Nationals at the end of May.

"Last year was my first year with it. We've had some Scottish championships so we have had big events but nothing like the MX Nationals."

"I put loads of work into it purely because I'm passionate about it and I care what people think. I don't want to run a sh\*t, I want people to come over the hill and when they see the track for the first time they want to ride it because it looks so good. I think that's half the battle. People need to want to ride where they're going – if the track looks rundown where's the inspiration to pull your bike out or even travel to get there? I know that from my own experience."

"I like to prep the track how I would like to ride it because I know there's nothing worse than spending all your money – even if it's just on a new chain and sprockets – and making loads of effort only to go somewhere that's sh\*t. I would like to provide people with a great day out every day so I try and make sure the track's always good because I know that's how I would like it."

"I'd hate people to go away saying that I don't care and that I'm just there for the money. As much as I need to make money I still want people to enjoy themselves and come back."

"I've had to put a lot of money into it so far and not really taken a lot out. I've had to buy a tractor and grading tools and I'm doing it right now because one day it could become my bread and butter so I'm investing everything into it. It's purely strategic thinking for when I do have to give up racing."

"It's a case of run the best racetrack I can so people want to come back. I just want it to be a great track because that's just the way I am."



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panning your hole in. Now I feel I've got a real good balance and have got a real good trainer who helps me out so I don't have to train as hard now to be as fit as I am."

Bryan's resolve was put to its biggest test in June last year when his main sponsor Pendrich Height Services – an Edinburgh-based steeplejack company – was bought out. With his primary source of income pulled from under him he was forced to compete on a shoestring budget.

"I was paying for everything. All my parts, my wages, I was giving BC some money as and when I could. I was working really hard at my track in the week just to survive. I definitely wasn't flush – I was just treading water. It actually got to a point where we'd had a breakdown at the Masters at Preston Docks and I literally didn't know what I was going to do."

"I'm still friends with those guys. It did go tits up for me but not for them. They obviously got an offer to sell the company and then it was a case of the money stopped and I wasn't getting paid anymore. BC stopped getting paid so he had to go get a job – he was fixing diggers at the side of the new Forth Road Bridge and was

doing that until November or December when he jumped back on board with us.

"They did what was best for their business but, unfortunately, the team was just collateral but I totally understand. That's what they'd worked hard for all their lives. There's definitely no hard feelings but it did leave me in a really hard position which was essentially going racing on my own dollar again."

Following his breakdown at Preston Docks matters came to a head at Foxhill at the sixth round of the British championship.

"I was totally out of money and then we went racing a week or two after the Maxxis at Foxhill. I had a great start in the second race and was up in second and the bike started breaking up – I could hear it detonating – and I ended up dropping back to about 12th because I was totally sh\*\*ting myself and without the bike actually breaking I had to pull out for the first time ever."

"I would always just ride until it breaks but I could not afford it. I didn't know what I'd do if the bike broke and I hurt myself because I've got a mortgage and I was getting married. I still had to get home – I was paying for my own fuel – and I didn't know how I was going to fix >>

## AC/BC!

### WHEN MECHANICS ROCK...

Behind every top rider is a top mechanic. Dave Thorpe had his dad Keith, Ryan Dungey has Carlos Rivera and Bryan's got the formidable BC...

"Me and BC have been buds for years, centuries. He raced schoolboys in Scotland and was a year above me in racing terms but we always knocked around with the same people. I used to stay at his house when I was 11, 12, 13 years old so we were good mates back in the day. He won a Scottish championship so he was fairly handy but he kinda fell off the radar when he came of age and got into cars and getting drunk."

"We bumped into each other at a party in 2004 – we'd both had a few – and he told me he wanted to come back and do some mechanicing. I was riding a KX250 and used to work on my own bike so he came back for the last British championship round and he's been with me ever since."

"I don't mind admitting it, BC's a massive part of what we do. He always gives me the best bike he can and I believe he's one of the best mechanics in the pits. I also believe he's one of the best technically-minded mechanics in the pits. He's not just a fitter, he makes his own race engines."

"BC is a special dude. He can be hard work and get right on my tits but I'm pretty sure I can get on his. My wife gets annoyed because we keep winding each other up – she says we're just like a married couple – but we just do it for a laugh. It just works good. It's one of those big, long relationships where you know exactly what each other is like so even when you slag each other to death it's all fun."





my bike if it actually locked up.

"As much as I was getting so much support from Kawasaki – they've always been awesome to me – all the performance parts were Pro Circuit and while Mitch Payton was cutting us a great deal and giving us access to good parts it was still costing a fortune."

In the past Bryan's safety net was to work as a carpenter for the family business but his father had gone to work for another company which, with no formal qualifications to his name, left him high and dry.

"If I'd blown the bike to sh\*t that day it would have been easily a few grand to bring the bike back up to that spec so while the bike was still running I pulled off. I was devastated because at that point I was still in the fight for third in the championship. That was so tough."

Going into Foxhill he was sitting fourth in the championship – just 11 points off Ben Watson in third – and his difficult circumstances prompted an offer of help from Richard Clarke, Steven's father, that developed into a full-blown ride this season. However, at the time

he had personal sponsors to think about and his integrity – even with his season on the line – wouldn't allow him to walk away from his commitments.

"I'm not that kind of asshole who would chuck a load of people under the bus because of the offer of a few pounds at the end of the road. I have a lot of loyalty to a lot of people who have supported me through my whole career and, because I showed them that loyalty at that time, when I did decide I was going to go with Husky and change a lot of the brands they were more than happy to wave me off with no hard feelings."

However, contact had been made and when the season ended he did the deal for 2016 with Apico Husqvarna...

"Stuey Summers, the chief technician, is Steven's mechanic and I've worked with him before when I did a fill-in period on CAS Honda in 2009. We've been friends for years and years and years – we raced together in schoolboys – and have always got on well."

"Maybe it was through his recommendation but I know that Richard Clarke, who's the team owner, was looking to expand his team for this season and he ended up getting in touch with me. We started speaking about a ride for this year and it all just came about pretty easily. They're easy guys to deal with, they're straightforward and it was relatively easy to put everything together."

With three races down and five to go Bryan, despite his disastrous round at Lyng, sits third in the Maxxis championship just 23 points off the lead. Not bad for a man who started racing the series when many of his rivals were still holding their mums' hands on the walk to school...

"I just love it. I love the feeling of success you get when you have a good weekend – especially when you work as hard as we do. I do it for BC – he puts a lot into it as well and I know he appreciates the effort I put in and gets a thrill when we do well – and I do it for my brother Deano and my wife Ashley. They all love it when I do well..."

*Hawkstone Park proved a happy hunting ground and provided Bry with a stunning Maxxis moto victory*





# ALL OVER THE WORLD!

After one dusty North African event and two muddy-as-hell rounds of this year's Enduro World Championship DBR takes a closer look at the status quo . . .

Words and photos by Future7Media

**W**hen the announcement came through that an EnduroGP class would be introduced into the Enduro World Championship it wasn't exactly met by a wave of enthusiasm and fanfare. In an attempt to be more MXGP it was announced that 2016 would be the last year of the long-running Enduro1, Enduro2 and Enduro 3 senior class structure. For 2017 a simplified EnduroGP and Enduro 1 class line-up would take effect.

To ease riders and teams into things, this year the EnduroGP class would be an additional 'overall' category with the E1, E2 and E3 classes remaining. What we have now is a kind of half-way house to what we'll have next year – new and old classes mixed together with a very definite focus from the promoters on the EnduroGP class.

For the first time in many, many years riders aren't competing exclusively within their respective capacity classes. Instead they're competing against each and every rider in the senior classes. 250F riders no longer only compete against quarter-litre four-poppers and 300cc two-stroke racers no longer have to worry only about those on the same type of machinery. It's kind of confusing for those looking in from the outside.

Everything is jumbled up. Instead of the Enduro 1 class leading the entry followed by Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 the series now features an overall start order. After three rounds of the series it's taught us a number of interesting points!

The opening round of the championship is now hugely important. More so than ever before. Have a good run through the first two days of competition and you're then well placed to start round two

near the sharp-end of the entry. Have a bad run and, well, basically you're kind of screwed.

Christophe Nambotin – KTM's #1 rider in the EWC series – injured his hand in Morocco. He didn't race in Portugal or Greece. When he returns, instead of slotting in somewhere near the rear of the Enduro 2 class he'll be near the rear of the complete entry. From there he's kind of forgotten about and racing against riders he shouldn't be anywhere near.

The 'new system' offers little incentive for Wild Card riders to give the series a go. Taddy Blazusiak, a rider who's long raced one or two EWC events each year, openly commented that he'd likely never race another world championship event because being stuck at the rear of the entry made it impossible to compete on level terms with riders he should be battling with.

And Taddy's comments were mirrored by Ivan Cervantes' at the recent Greek GP. A rider that didn't make a great start to his championship campaign, Ivan is experiencing first hand just how difficult it is to match the times of those at the front of the entry now that he's buried mid-pack.

One further spanner in the works is the fact that Eero Remes is now just a few points from the lead in the EnduroGP championship. A 250F mounted TM rider, Remes is official an Enduro 1 class rider. If he wins the 'premier' EnduroGP class on a 250f, as well as the 250f Enduro 1 class, does he become a double world champion?

While it's a little too early to predict what the future of the Enduro World Championship holds there are certainly concerns about the slimmed down 'top riders only' style series. A series that might feature a more sparsely populated paddock and a number of today's salaried racers scratching their heads as to what to do next. |



## DRY. WET. WET AGAIN

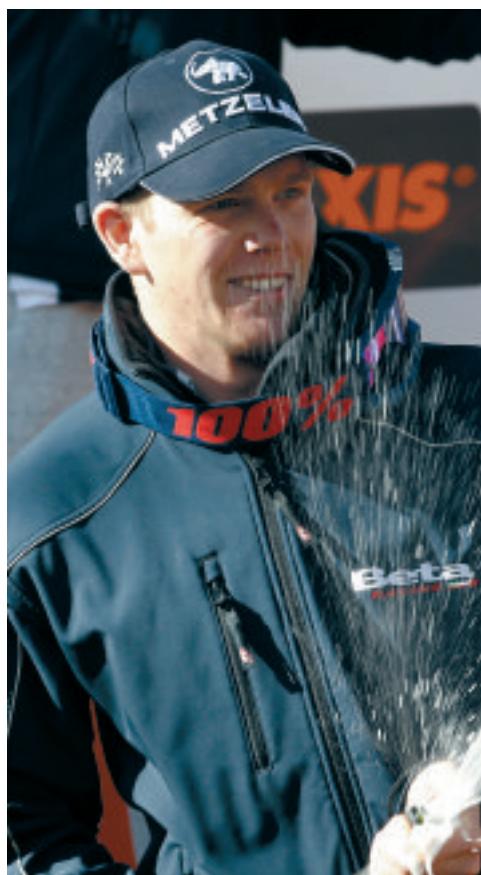
In recent season there's been little other than dry, dusty conditions to test the EWC's riders. This year two of the opening three races have been muders which have proved a bitter pill to swallow for some riders. Keeping these challenging events running smoothly has also proved difficult with neither the Portuguese or Greek organisers having enough on-the-ground manpower. The result has been shortened special test. The mud and ruts has certainly injected a little more endurance into the series but it's also highlighted that age-old fact that all events are run by enthusiasts and motor clubs with limited resources and staff.



## HOLCOMBE AND WATSON

Both stepping into senior class EWC competition for the first time both Steve Holcombe and Nathan Watson have turned more than a few heads with their spirited performances and laid-back attitudes. With Watson surpassing the expectations of his KTM team, he's stood forward as the only rider capable of sustaining day-long challenges to Remes' E1 class domination. With no real enduro experience to call upon, Nathan has in many ways been the saviour of the KTM squad – a rider who's worth is unquestionably on the up-and-up.

As for Holcombe, a 16-point lead at the head of the Enduro 3 championship standings is something few expected. Looking to challenge for the podium Steve quickly became the rider to beat in E3 as well as delivering a number of impressive overall results. Both dealing well with the dry terrain of Morocco and equally excelling in the mud in Portugal and Greece – despite a few crashes – both riders look set to have a notable impact on the 2016 series.





Danny McCanney is yet to show his full potential after knee surgery



Lee Sealey is battling away in the Junior class



Jamie McCanney hurt his foot just before Greece and couldn't compete



Jack Eddy is back on the tour following his finger injury

## THE BRITS

Very good, very bad and indifferent. That pretty much sums up the way things have started for Brits. Lead by Steve Holcombe and Nathan Watson, for McCanney brothers Jamie and Danny it's been a mixed bag so far. Racing his way back to full fitness and getting two runner-up results and a third for his efforts along the way, things were looking good for Jamie. Then the cruellest of luck saw him pick up a foot injury just days before the GP of Greece. No sooner were things looking good for Jamie his fortunes have changed massively.

Elder brother Danny has yet to show his true potential. Returning from knee surgery things just haven't clicked for the former junior champ. Left scratching his head as to what needs to be done in order to find his form, Danny endured a torrid time of things in Greece. Danny's performances so far certainly haven't been a true indication of what he's capable of.

Jack Edmondson's quest to top the 125cc Enduro Youth championship was dealt a serious blow in Morocco where he broke a finger and was forced to miss the second round. Back in action in Greece he claimed two more podium finishes, showing that while topping the championship is going to be anything but easy winning races is well within his capabilities.

Sixth in the Enduro Youth class Lee Sealey is more than capable of adding to the day two podium result he got in Portugal. While in the Enduro Junior class TM powered Josh Gots is battling his way closer to the top 10. With the upcoming Scandinavian rounds of the series set to be tough 'uns more strong results from all the Brits should well be on the cards.

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Beefy Aussie Matt Phillips has been awesome all year long

## ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

One thing that's clear is that no one manufacturer is dominating this year. TM leads the way in Enduro 1, Sherco mounted Matt Phillips is so far the rider to beat in E2 and Britain's own Steve Holcombe is the leader of the E3 championship. But there's also been wins for Husky, thanks to Mathias Bellino, as well as for Yamaha. Topping the Enduro 2 class on day two of the GP of Greece Frenchman Larrieu ensured that another manufacturer's hat was metaphorically thrown into the ring.



Loic Larrieu topped the Enduro 2 class in Greece

## PRIVATEERS - FEW AND FAR BETWEEN

Are we about to see a wave of teams and privately funded riders leave the world championship? In recent seasons the number of non-team racer has reduced and the number of non-factory backed teams has also dropped. With the possibility of a longer 10-round series in 2017 and the fact that the spotlight is focused only on those at the head of the EnduroGP class, many within the paddock are worried that the 'more professional' series (read more logically complicated and therefore expensive) will only force more of the smaller teams and privateer riders from the series.

Davide Guarneri is struggling to find his feet in the EWC



## THE MX ROOKIES - RAUCHENECKER AND GUARNERI

While Nathan Watson is making the transition from MXGP regular to competitive woods racer look easy the same can't be said for Husqvarna's Pascal Rauchenecker and Italy's Davide Guarneri. So far both riders have endured a pretty tough time of things with both riders more often than not learning the hard way and taking a few knocks. Aside from lots of crashes neither rider has shown any real flashes of brilliance with both looking for a more productive second half to the series.



## GIANLUCA MARTINI - A KAWASAKI ON THE BOX

With his sleeves rolled up Italian Gianluca Martini is the non-factory backed rider who's impressed the most so far this season. Seemingly struggling to make any serious impression on the top six of the Enduro 1 class in 2015, so far this year he's punched well above his privateer status and looks set to finish ahead of a number of factory backed riders if he can continue his impressive form. Currently third in the Enduro 1 championship Martini has well and truly shaken up the E1 class.

Gianluca Martini is stirring things up on his KX-F in Enduro 1

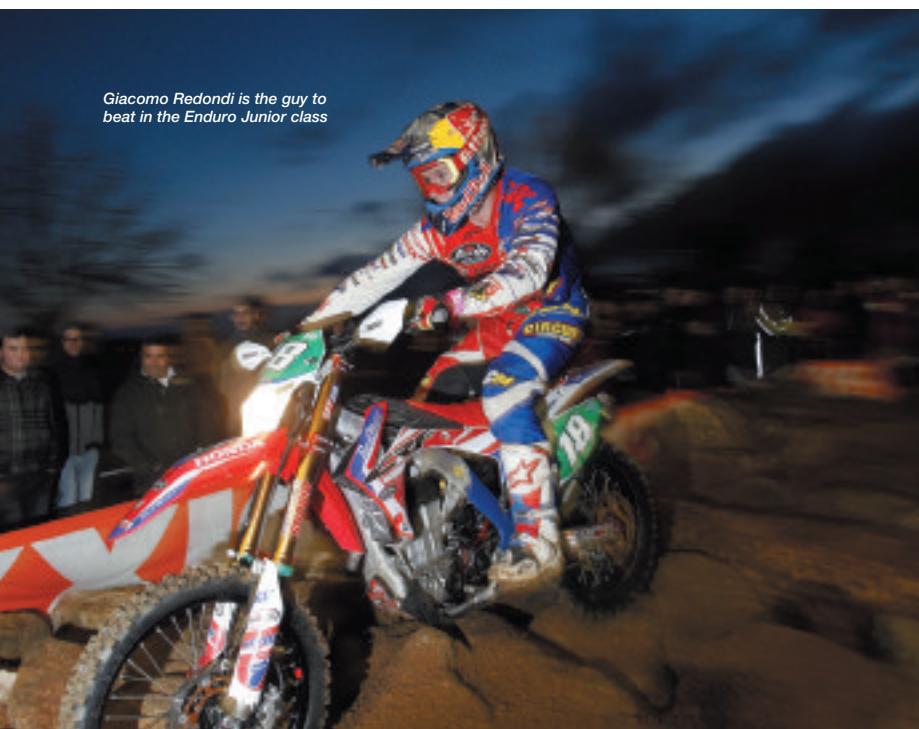


## IVAN - OVER & OUT

Ivan Cervantes looks set to bow out of world championship competition at the end of this year to focus on rally competition. Far from the racer he's been in recent seasons, a serious family illness meant that the Spaniard's mind was elsewhere ahead of and during the opening rounds of the series. Also going up against a number of younger, hungry riders, Ivan's sparkle simply hasn't sparkled in 2016. With defending E1 champ Eero Remes so far running away with the championship, Ivan has secured just one third place result from the six days of competition. Down in sixth in the class standings, 2016 isn't looking like it's going to bring much in terms of winning results for one of the series most decorated racers.



Giacomo Redondi is the guy to beat in the Enduro Junior class



## NO STOPPING THE TASSIE CHARGER

Matt Phillips rocked up at the EWC opener carrying a little extra beef and determined to show that his move to Sherco was anything but a sideways career step. Three rounds in the two-time world champ sits at the top of the E2 and EnduroGP championships having proved his little 300cc four-stroke Sherco to be a potent weapon. Taking a bit of a gamble and opting not to race a 450, Phillips' has so far bossed his way to two overall day wins and three E2 class victories. Although unable to match the pace of teeny, tiny Eero Remes in Greece, Phillips has once again shown he's going to be a tough man to beat.



## JUNIORS - OLD AND NEW

Competing in what's seemingly his 17th season of Enduro Junior class competition Italy's Giacomo Redondi has so far had things all his own way with six days wins. One of the oldest and certainly the most experienced rider in the class behind him is Gas Gas mounted Diogo Ventura – one of only four other riders to have scored points on all days. The only notable newcomer to the junior ranks is Spain's Josep Garcia. The hard charging pint-sized Husky rider has had a tough time of things but has also shown the speed to challenge for wins despite only stepping up onto a 250F at the end of last season.



## TAYLOR ROBERT - THE UNEXPECTED MUD MASTER

Who'd have thought it – a west coast 'merican getting the job done in the mud in Europe. Taylor Robert has quietly gone about his business in the Enduro 2 class and come close to twice claiming an overall day win. With the more experienced duo of Nambotin and Cervantes expected to lead KTM's EWC effort, Robert, in much the same way Watson has, is adapting well to life as an enduro racer. With a class win I Portugal and a brace of podium results Robert has worked his way between E2 early pace setters Matt Phillips and Mathias Bellino. It's only a matter of time before an overall win comes his way.

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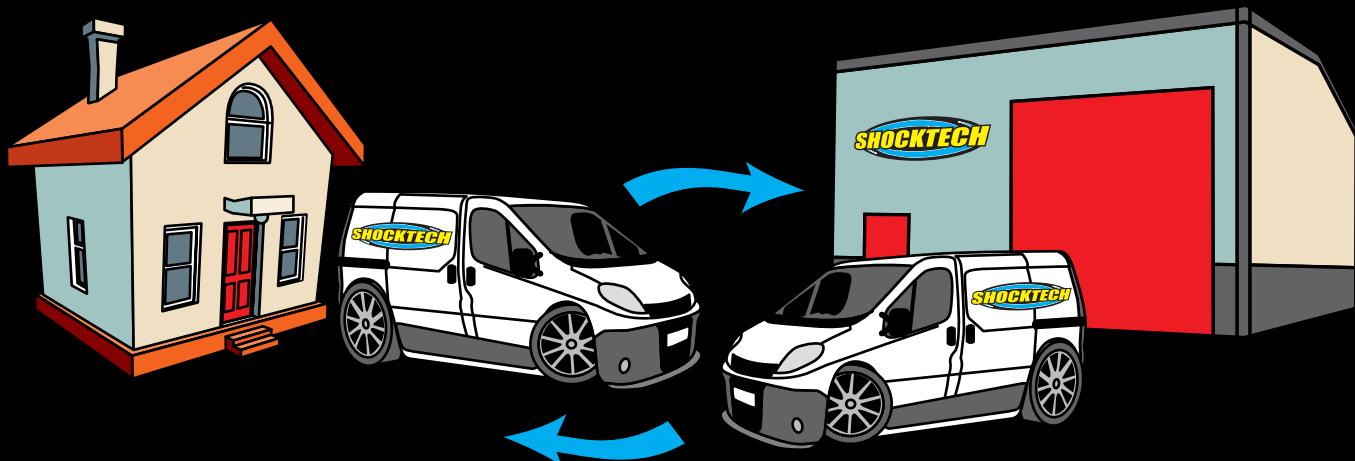


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Dane Reeves is making a run at the Biggies title



# JUDD TIMES!

Welcoming MCF National titles back into the youth arena in 2016 the Judd Racing MX Premier Cup is already four rounds down and into the second half of their season. With Claudio Bernardinelli at the helm of LS Promotions – and with good line-ups in all the youth sections – the first season of this brand-new venture is going well.

In the Autos there are two British National titles up for grabs – Under 7s and Under 8s and so far both championships have featured a terrific head-to-head shoot out. In the Under 7s Team Judd Racing's youngest member Zane Stephens has been bar-to-bar with Micky Eccles trained Archie Jay Girdham while in the Under 8s another knife edge battle wages between Kalvin Kelly and William Haddock. Kelly has amassed a nine heat win total so far against eight for Haddock while in the other shoot out Girdham has 10 race victories with Stephens nailing nine from four rounds run. All four guys have been setting a cracking pace.

Judd Racing's 65cc star Ollie Colmer forged his way clear in the Junior skirmish only to then

suffer a cruel leg break between rounds three and four. Colmer had been on fire, topping the box at Mildenhall and Landrake while finishing tied on points for the overall win but nudged out at Preston Docks. Bailey Johnson along with wild-card runner Wal Shane Beaney have been the other two standout stars and it's Johnson who now leads the 65 championship chase.

In the Smallies Bobby Bruce and Ike Carter smashed it out the park at round one. Ultimately Bruce nailed a terrific overall victory but with both guys then jumping ship it was Jack Grayshon who took up the victory reins. With conclusive overall wins at rounds two and three, runner up at FatCat, Grayshon, has the championship by the scruff of the neck. Sam Atkinson and Ben Clark have nailed a heat win apiece and along with Jack Scally they have featured prominently.

The opening round of the Biggies featured a storming winning display by Team Green wild card Lewis Hall. Calum Mitchell had to give sway that weekend but since then Cal's completely bossed

FOUR ROUNDS IN AND THE JUDD RACING JUGGERNAUT LOOKS SET TO KEEP ON TRUCKING ALL SEASON LONG...

it winning every round. Not always doing it the easy way it has to be said but always entertaining especially coming from the back in swashbuckling style. In the championship standings Dane Clark Reeves is in second place - his best rounds duelling in the sand at Preston Docks and FatCat where he finished overall runner-up.

With the Rookies split into two racing sections Howard Wainwright conclusively leads the way in the 250F championship while Jack Wankling has his nose in front in the 125s. Winning the first 11 motos on the spin – and with a grand total of 18 after four rounds – no one could argue Wainwright is the man to topple in this one. Other heat wins have gone the way of Jake Curtis Stevens and Aiden Williams while consistent shows have put Harry Pritchard in series second.

In the far more evenly matched 125 class Kurtis Griffiths, Drew Anderson and Jack Wankling are all in with a good shout of lifting the silverware.

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Kurt Griffiths is a threat in the 125cc Rookies class



Zane Stevens snatches an Auto class holey



Archie Jay Girdham sits second in the Autos



Bailey Johnson is bossing the 65 class so far...

## SERIES STANDINGS

### Auto 6/7

- 1 Zane Stephens 833, 2 Archie Jay Girdham 826,
- 3 Hayden Statt 739, 4 Alfie Cooper 726,
- 5 Daniel Goodman 695, 6 Riley Loftus 620

### Auto 7/8

- 1 Kalvin Kelly 827, 2 William Haddock 810,
- 3 Spike Stevens 681, 4 Levi Hilling 663,
- 5 Brandon Buckley 651, 6 Ryan Waggott 650

### 65cc class

- 1 Bailey Johnson 828, 2 Ollie Colmer 621,
- 3 Joel Fisher 649, 4 Riley Keene 648,
- 5 James Barker 640, 6 Beau Brown 596

### SW85s

- 1 Jack Grayson 811, 2 Sam Atkinson 734,
- 3 Jack Scally 738, 4 Ben Clark 723,
- 5 Tom Sedwick 656, 6 Alfie Rickwood 650

### BW85s

- 1 Calum Mitchell 890, 2 Dane Reeves 782,
- 3 Tom Murphy 719, 4 Danny Clarke 718,
- 5 Declan Hunter 659, 6 Taylor Arnold 612

### Rookies 125cc

- 1 Jack Wankling 804, 2 Drew Anderson 776,
- 3 Kurtis Griffiths 774, 4 George Simpson 725,
- 5 Lewis Taylor 648, 6 Will Young 375

### Rookies 250F

- 1 Howard Wainwright 894, 2 Harry Pritchard 702,
- 3 Jamie Osborne 696, 4 Connor Fish 672,
- 5 Benjamin Knight 669, 6 Jake Curtis Stevens 663



Calum Mitchell has a comfortable lead in the Big Wheel class



Ben Clark tears up a FatCat berm



William Haddock catches some air in the Autos



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SPOTLIGHT ON...

# TODD RITCHIE #51

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Taking a look around this year's National paddock and the Judd Racing set-up must surely rank as one of the most impressive. Professional, colourful and most importantly as a team they're getting the right results for team managers Michelle Arnold and Scott Peters and trainer Jamie Smith.

Zane Stephens and Spike Stevens are the youngest squad members both racing 50cc Autos albeit in different classes and they're both flying high in their respective championships. In the 65s Ollie Colmer has been hitting the podiums in the first half of the outdoor season. Claiming nine heat wins from the opening three rounds Ollie led the MCF National Championship until recent injury dented his title hopes.

Ben Clark and Taylor Arnold carry the flag impressively in the 85s as team elder – 17 year old Todd Ritchie – rips it up in both the BYN and the MX Premier Cup in the 125cc division. And if that wasn't enough generosity handed around Judd Racing also help out Riley Keene and Harrison Greenough in the 65s.

Todd Ritchie first popped up on my radar as one to watch two years ago winning the GT Cup 85cc BW title. 2015 was spent learning the ropes on the 125 and this year he's really come out and smashed it. In the British Youth Nationals – with round three coming up next month – Todd's currently sitting in

championship second just eight points off top spot as American import Slade Tressler leads.

At the FatCat opener a string of second place results put Todd on the box as overall runner up, then a heat win at Brampton helped him get on the podium again – this time in third overall. It's also worth saying that had it not been for a few mechanical issues at Brampton Todd could well have been leading the series going into round three. In the MCF Premier Cup Adult 125s – where to be fair, the pace is a bit hotter – Todd is more than holding his own with consistent top six finishes. A podium finish in this one too before the season ends? Todd's well capable of that...

**Rage:** Hi Todd congratulations on a great season so far. As well as success in the BYN and MX Premier Cup you also finished on the podium at MX Master Kids. Up against 250F power with you on your 125 was this the best fun event of the year, or do you have another favourite meeting to recall?

**TR:** "Thank you! Yes, MX Master Kids at Mildenhall definitely was the best fun weekend so far this year. Even though I was outgunned, I was pleased to get third overall – well done to Brad Boughen and his team for the great weekend. If asked to pick out one favourite memory of the season so far I'd have to say my first BYN race win at Brampton was pretty special."

**Rage:** Working full time and compared with some of your competitors do you feel at a disadvantage when it comes to things like bike time and training?

**TR:** "I'm at college three days a week and then work with dad on Thursdays and Fridays so yeah, the only real bike time is at the weekends. Obviously more bike time would help but we do what we can. On the training front as a team we get together with Jamie Smith when possible and also we've been to Peter Eccles' gym – and while his place isn't close to where I live for regular visits he's worked out a programme for me to do at home."

**Rage:** What's the best thing about being in Team Judd Racing?

**TR:** "Apart from the great help and support it's nice to have the little guys to cheer on and I'm really looking forward to the rest of 2016. Just like to also say, massive thanks to all the sponsors – Judd Racing, Antix, Buttercup Farm MX, Daily Mail Newspapers, EHR Tuning, Elite Training, Gibson Tyres, Grasshopper Custom Printing, HGS Exhausts, JLP, JS Training, Pod, Pro Green MX, Rock Oil, Round One Sports Films, Samco Sport, Stevens & Sons Ltd, Talon Engineering, Thor and last but not least my family for all the support and help they are giving me this year."



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